

**MILTON**  
and  
**REPRESENTATIVE SHORT POEMS**  
SECOND SERIES



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by  
J. F. MACDONALD, M.A.

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## SOME ELEMENTARY NOTES ON THE EPIC, THE LYRIC, AND THE DRAMA

During the development of literature certain types met with such favor that they took on fairly regular forms and were classified in groups by critics, who, strange as it may seem, go almost as far back in the history of literature as the creators. The most famous and generally accepted of these classifications is that of Aristotle, the Greek philosopher and critic of the fourth century B.C., who divided poetry on the basis of its method of presentation by narrative, song, or action into epic, lyric, and dramatic. He was followed by the Italian critics and though there have been multifarious schemes presented since, his broad division is still generally accepted.

The epic is a long narrative poem dealing with the real or legendary exploits of gods or heroes. The oldest form of epic in all probability arose from the union of a great many narrative ballads that celebrated different incidents in the life of a national hero. A poet took all these, arranged them in some reasonable order, usually in the order of time, and rewrote them or at least revised them, so that they have the stamp of one man's style. This kind of collected or amalgamated popular epic is seen in the old English *Beowulf* and in the great Greek epics of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The literary epic, on the other hand, is a highly-unified and self-conscious imitation of the genuine popular epic. It is always the product of

some poet working in a literary age. Virgil's *Aeneid*, for instance, was written in the Golden Age of Roman literature, the time of Augustus, for the express purpose of glorifying the Julian family and the Roman people. It adopts as literary conventions most of the devices that are peculiar to the style of Homer's epics. Milton's *Paradise Lost* belongs to this group of literary epics written on classical models, Milton following Virgil as he had followed Homer. A kind of Romantic epic developed in Italy at the time of the Renaissance. Love and adventure were the chief themes that inspired its writers, who told much the same sort of story as had filled the older prose romances. The one great English epic of this type is the *Faerie Queen*, in which Spenser embodies all the romance and chivalry of the early Renaissance period. It looks as if epics had gone permanently out of fashion, for though they are still written, as witness Charles Doughty's colossal one in six volumes, *The Dawn in Britain* (1906), the shorter lyric is now in favor.

The lyric, as its name implies, was originally a song to be accompanied on the lyre and the song, as all critics agree, is the purest form of lyric. In its strict sense, then, a lyric is a short poem that expresses a single emotion. It is, however, more loosely used to include almost any fairly short poem. Sonnets, odes, elegies, ballads, and hymns are only the better-known subdivisions of the great family of lyrics. A lyric, then, obviously may have as its subject-matter any thought or feeling that can enter the soul or the imagination of man. That it may move the imagination or the spirit of other men it must, whatever its

subject-matter, make a direct appeal to the feelings and senses; it must, to use Milton's famous description be "simple, sensuous, passionate."

Drama falls into two great classes, tragedy and comedy. In Greek usage tragedy was the drama of gods and heroes, comedy that of the common people. It was felt that the first must be grave and dignified, while the other might be highly amusing and even indecorous. The two types were never mixed. There was no humour in a tragedy and very rarely any seriousness in a comedy, though at times a comedy might be sharp satire on life. Since the usual outcome of a Greek tragedy was the downfall of some great personage, we have come to think of a tragedy as a play that ends in disaster and a comedy as a play that ends happily. Critics have subdivided plays on the basis of their subject-matter and its treatment into numerous classes. The catalogue given by the fussy old Polonius in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* shows the variety of types that were recognized as early as 1600: "The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited."

A play, which is just a story told in dialogue, is the hardest of all literary forms to write. The author must make his characters talk in such a way that their conversation will seem perfectly natural and yet will give the audience all the information they need to follow the story. Further he must be able to enter into the very souls of widely different types of people and show how these people act and speak under the stress of different emotions. So rarely is this

understanding of the human heart combined with the shaping imagination which the dramatist needs that really great plays are far fewer in number than masterpieces of any other branch of art. The English-speaking peoples are blessed in having Shakespeare as their common possession, a dramatist whose only serious rivals are the great tragedians of ancient Greece.

## L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE loathed Melancholy,  
 Of Cerberus, and blackest Midnight born,  
 In Stygian cave forlorn  
   'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights  
     unholy;  
 Find out some uncouth cell, 5  
   Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings  
 And the night-raven sings;  
   There under the ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,  
 As ragged as thy locks,  
   In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell, 10  
   But come thou goddess fair and free,  
 In Heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne,  
 And by men, heart-easing Mirth;  
 Whom lovely Venus at a birth  
 With two sister Graces more 15  
 To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore;  
 Or whether (as some sāger sing)  
 The frolic wind that breathes the spring,  
 S.W. Zephyr with Aurora playing,  
 As he met her once a-Maying, 20  
 There on beds of violet blue,  
 And fresh-blown roses washt in dew,  
 Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,  
 So buxom, blithe, and debonair.  
 { Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee 25  
   Jest and youthful Jollity,  
   Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,

Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,  
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,  
And love to live in dimple sleek; 30  
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,  
And Laughter holding both his sides.  
Come, and trip it as ye go  
On the light fantastic toe,  
And in thy right hand lead with thee 35  
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;  
And if I give thee honour due,  
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,  
To live with her, and live with thee,  
In unreprieved pleasures free; 40  
To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-tow'r in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;  
Then to come in spite of sorrow, 45  
And at my window bid good morrow,  
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,  
Or the twisted eglantine.  
While the cock with lively din,  
Scatters the rear of darkness thin, 50  
And to the stack, or the barn door,  
Stoutly struts his dames before:  
Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn  
Cheerly rouse the slumb'ring Morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill, 55  
Through the high wood echoing shrill.  
Sometime walking not unseen  
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,  
Right against the eastern gate,  
Where the great Sun begins his state, 60



Rob'd in flames, and amber light,  
The clouds in thousand liveries dight.  
While the ploughman near at hand,  
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe, 65  
And the mower whets his scythe,  
And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale.  
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures  
Whilst the landscape round it measures; 70  
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,  
Mountains on whose barren breast  
The labouring clouds do often rest;  
Meadows trim with daisies pied, 75  
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.  
Towers, and battlements it sees  
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,  
Where perhaps some beauty lies,  
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes. 80  
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,  
From betwixt two aged oaks;  
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,  
Are at their savoury dinner set  
Of herbs, and other country messes, 85  
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;  
And then in haste her bower she leaves,  
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;  
Or if the earlier season lead  
To the tann'd haycock in the mead. 90  
Sometimes with secure delight  
The upland hamlets will invite:  
When the merry bells ring round,

And the jocund rebecks sound  
To many a youth, and many a maid, 95  
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;  
And young and old come forth to play  
On a sunshine holiday,  
Till the live-long day-light fail;  
{ Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100  
{ With stories told of many a feat,  
How faery Mab the junkets eat;  
She was pinch'd and pull'd she said;  
And he by friars' lantern led,  
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat 105  
To earn his cream-bowl duly set;  
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,  
His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn  
That ten day-labourers could not end.  
Then lies him down the lubber fiend, 110  
And streched out all the chimney's length,  
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;  
And crop-full out of doors he flings,  
Ere the first cock his matin rings.  
{ Thus done the tales, to bed they creep, 115  
{ By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.  
Towered cities please us then,  
And the busy hum of men,  
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,  
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold, 120  
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes  
Rain influence, and judge the prize  
Of wit, or arms, while both contend  
To win her grace, whom all commend.  
There let Hymen oft appear, 125  
In saffron robe, with taper clear,

L'ALLEGRO

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,  
With mask, and antique pageantry;  
Such sights as youthful poets dream  
On summer eves by haunted stream. 130

Then to the well-trod stage anon,  
If Jonson's learned sock be on,  
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

And ever against eating cares, 135

Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
Married to immortal verse;  
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,  
In notes with many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out; 140

With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
The melting voice through mazes running:  
Untwisting all the chains that tie

The hidden soul of harmony.  
That Orpheus' self may heave his head 145

From golden slumber on a bed  
Of heap'd Elysian flow'rs; and hear  
Such strains as would have won the ear  
Of Pluto, to have quite set free  
His half-regain'd Eurydice.] 150

These delights, if thou canst give,  
Mirth with thee, I mean to live.

## IL PENSEROSO

HENCE vain deluding joys,  
The brood of Folly without father bred,  
How little you bested,  
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys;  
Dwell in some idle brain; 5  
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,  
As thick and numberless  
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,  
Or likest hovering dreams,  
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. 10  
But hail thou Goddess, sage and holy,  
Hail divinest Melancholy,  
Whose saintly visage is too bright  
To hit the sense of human sight;  
And therefore to our weaker view, 15  
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;  
Black, but such as in esteem  
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem;  
Or that starr'd Ethiop queen that strove  
To set her beauty's praise above 20  
The sea nymphs, and their powers offended,  
Yet thou art higher far descended;  
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta long of yore,  
To solitary Saturn bore;  
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign, 25  
Such mixture was not held a stain);  
Oft in glimmering bow'rs, and glades  
He met her; and in secret shades

Of woody Ida's inmost grove,  
 While yet there was no fear of Jove. 30  
 Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,  
 Sober, steadfast, and demure, *l. 24.*  
 All in a robe of darkest grain,  
 Flowing with majestic train,  
 And sable stole of cypress lawn, *l. 25. - l. 26.* 35  
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn.  
 Come, but keep thy wonted state, }  
 With ev'n step, and musing gait, }  
 And looks commercing with the skies,  
 Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes: 40  
 There held in holy passion still,  
 Forget thyself to marble, till  
 With a sad leaden downward cast,  
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast.  
 And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet, 45  
 Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,  
 And hears the Muses in a ring,  
 Aye round about Jove's altar sing.  
 And add to these retired Leisure,  
 That in trim garden takes his pleasure; 50  
 But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,  
 Him that soars on golden wing,  
 Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,  
 The cherub Contemplation,  
 And the mute Silence hist along, 55  
 'Less Philomel will deign a song,  
 In her sweetest, saddest plight,  
 Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,  
 While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke,  
 Gently o'er th' accustom'd oak: 60  
 Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,

Most musical, most melancholy!  
Thee chauntress oft the woods among,  
I woo to hear thy even-song;  
And missing thee, I walk unseen 65  
On the dry smooth-shaven green,  
To behold the wand'ring Moon,  
Riding near her highest noon,  
Like one that had been led astray  
Through the Heaven's wide pathless way; 70  
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,  
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.  
Oft on a plat of rising ground,  
I hear the far-off curfew sound, *curfew* 75  
Over some wide-water'd shore,  
Swinging slow with sullen roar;  
Or if the air will not permit,  
Some still removed place will fit,  
Where glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, 80  
Far from all resort of mirth,  
Save the cricket on the hearth,  
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,  
To bless the doors from nightly harm:  
Or let my lamp at midnight hour 85  
Be seen in some high lonely tow'r,  
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,  
With thrice-great Hermes; or unsphere  
The spirit of Plato to unfold  
What worlds, or what vast regions hold 90  
The immortal mind that hath forsook  
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;  
And of these daemons that are found  
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,

Whose power hath a true consent 95  
 With planet, or with element.  
 Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy  
 In scepter'd pall come sweeping by,  
 Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,  
 Or the tale of Troy divine, 100  
 Or what (though rare) of later age,  
 Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.

But, O sad virgin, that thy power  
 Might raise Musæus from his bower,  
 Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing 105  
 Such notes as warbled to the string  
 Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,  
 And made Hell grant what Love did seek.  
 Or call up him that left half told 28  
 The story of Cambuscan bold, 110  
 Of Camball, and of Algarsife,  
 And who had Canace to wife,  
 That own'd the virtuous ring and glass,  
 And of the wondrous horse of brass  
 On which the Tartar king did ride; 115  
 And if aught else great bards beside  
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,  
 Of turneys and of trophies hung;  
 Of forests, and enchantments drear,  
 Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120

Thus Night oft see me in thy pale career,  
 Till civil-suited Morn appear;  
 Not tricked and frownc'd, as she was wont  
 With the Attic boy to hunt,  
 But kerchieft in a comely cloud, 125  
 While rocking winds are piping loud:  
 Or usher'd with a shower still,

When the gust hath blown his fill,  
Ending on the rustling leaves,  
With minute drops from off the eaves . 130

And when the sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me Goddess bring  
To arched walks of twilight groves,  
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves  
Of pine, or monumental oak, 135

Where the rude axe with heaved stroke,  
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,  
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.  
There in close covert by some brook,  
Where no profaner eye may look, 140

Hide me from day's garish eye;  
While the bee with honied thigh,  
That at her flowr'y work doth sing,  
And the waters murmuring

With such consort as they keep, 145  
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;  
And let some strange mysterious dream  
Wave at his wings in airy stream  
Of lively portraiture display'd,  
Softly on my eye-lids laid. 150

And as I wake, sweet music breathe  
Above, about, or underneath,  
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,  
Or th' unseen Genius of the wood.

But let my due feet never fail 155  
To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
And love the high embowed roof,  
With antique pillars massy proof,  
And storied windows richly dight.  
Casting a dim religious light. 160



There let the pealing organ blow  
To the full voic'd quire below,  
In service high, and anthems clear,  
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies, 165  
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.

And may at last my weary age  
Find out the peaceful hermitage,  
The hairy gown and mossy cell,  
Where I may sit, and rightly spell 170  
Of every star that Heav'n doth shew,  
And every herb that sips the dew;  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like prophetic strain.

These pleasures Melancholy give, 175  
And I with thee will choose to live.

## COMUS: A MASQUE

## THE PERSONS

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *afterwards in the habit of*  
COMUS, *with his Crew.* [Thyrsis.]

THE LADY.

FIRST BROTHER.

SECOND BROTHER.

SABRINA, *the Nymph.*

THE CHIEF PERSONS WHICH PRESENTED,  
WERE

{ *The Lord* BRACKLEY.

{ *Mr. THOMAS EGERTON, his brother.*

*The Lady* ALICE EGERTON.

*The first Scene discovers a wild wood.*

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court  
My mansion is, where these immortal shapes  
Of bright aerial spirits live inspher'd  
In regions mild of calm and serene air;  
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,                   5  
Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care  
Confin'd, and pester'd in this pinfold here,  
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being;  
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,

After this mortal change, to her true servants 10  
Amongst the enthron'd gods on sainted seats.

Yet some there be that by due steps aspire  
To lay their just hands on that golden key  
That opes the palace of eternity;  
To such my errand is, and but for such, 15  
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds,  
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway  
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,  
Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove, 20  
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,  
That like to rich and various gems inlay  
The unadorned bosom of the deep;  
Which he to grace his tributary gods

By course commits to several government, 25  
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,  
And wield their little tridents; but this isle,  
The greatest and the best of all the main,  
He quarters to his blue-hair'd deities;

And all this tract that fronts the falling sun, 30

A noble peer of mickle trust and power *Early rising and*

Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide

An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:

Where his fair off-spring nursed in princely lore,

Are coming to attend their father's state, 35

And new-entrusted sceptre; but their way

Lies through the perplext paths of this drear wood,

The nodding horror of whose shady brows

Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger.

And here their tender age might suffer peril, 40

But that by quick command from sovran Jove,

I was despatcht for their defence and guard;

And listen why; for I will tell ye now  
What never yet was heard in tale or song,  
From old or modern bard, in hall or bow'r. 45

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape  
Crush'd the sweet poison of misused wine,  
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,  
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,  
On Circe's island fell: (who knows not Circe 50  
The daughter of the Sun? whose charmed cup  
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,  
And downward fell into a grovelling swine)  
This Nymph that gaz'd upon his clustering locks,  
With ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth, 55  
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son  
Much like his father, but his mother more,  
Whom therefore she brought up and Comus nam'd;  
Who ripe, and frolic of his full-grown age,  
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, 60  
At last betakes him to this ominous wood;  
And in thick shelter of black shades imbowl'd,  
Excels his mother at her mighty art,  
Offering to every weary traveller,  
His orient liquor in a crystal glass, 65  
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste  
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),  
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,  
Th' express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd  
Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear, 70  
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,  
All other parts remaining as they were;  
And they, so perfect is their misery,  
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,  
But boast themselves more comely than before; 75

And all their friends and native home forget,  
 To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.  
 Therefore when any favour'd of high Jove  
 Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,  
 Swift as a sparkle of a glancing star 80  
 > I shoot from Heav'n, to give him safe convoy;  
 As now I do: but first I must put off  
 These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof,  
 And take the weeds and likeness of a swain *Thyrsis*  
 That to the service of this house belongs; 85  
 Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,  
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,  
 And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,  
 And in this office of his mountain watch  
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid 90  
 Of this occasion. But I hear the tread  
 Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

*COMUS enters, with a charming-rod in his hand, his  
 glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters,  
 headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but other-  
 wise like men and women, their apparel glistening;  
 they come in making a riotous and unruly  
 noise, with torches in their hands.*

## COMUS

The star that bids the shepherd fold,  
 Now the top of Heav'n doth hold;  
 And the gilded car of day 95  
 His glowing axle doth allay  
 In the steep Atlantic stream;  
 And the slope Sun his upward beam

Shoots against the dusky pole;  
 Pacing toward the other goal 100  
 Of his chamber in the East.  
 Meanwhile welcome joy, and feast,  
 Midnight shout, and revelry,  
 Tipsy dance, and jollity.  
 Braid your locks with rosy twine, 105  
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.  
 Rigour now is gone to bed,  
 And Advice with scrupulous head,  
 Strict Age, and sour Severity,  
 With their grave saws in slumber lie. 110  
 We that are of purer fire  
 Imitate the starry quire,  
 Who in their nightly watchful spheres  
 Lead in swift round the months and years.  
 The sounds, and seas with all their finny drove 115  
 Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;  
 And on the tawny sands and shelves,  
 Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.  
 By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,  
 The wood-nymphs deck'd with daisies trim, 120  
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:  
 {What hath night to do with sleep?  
 {Night hath better sweets to prove,  
 Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love.  
 Come, let us our rites begin, 125  
 'Tis only day-light that makes sin,  
 Which these dun shades will ne'er report.  
 Hail Goddess of nocturnal sport,  
 Dark veil'd Cotytto, t' whom the secret flame  
 Of mid-night torches burns; mysterious dame 130  
 That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb

Of Stygian Darkness spets her thickest gloom,  
 And makes one blot of all the air;  
 Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,  
 Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend 135  
 Us thy vow'd priests; till utmost end  
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out;  
 Ere the babbling eastern scout,  
 The nice Morn on th' Indian steep,  
 From her cabin'd loophole peep, 140  
 And to the tell-tale Sun descry  
 Our conceal'd solemnity.  
 Come, knit hands, and beat the ground,  
 In a light fantastic round.

*The measure*

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace 145  
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.  
 Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees:  
 Our number may affright: some virgin sure  
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)  
 Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms, 150  
 And to my wily trains; I shall ere long  
 Be well stock'd with as fair a herd as graz'd  
 About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl  
 My dazzling spells into the spongy air, }  
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion, 155  
 And give it false presentments; lest the place  
 And my quaint habits breed astonishment,  
 And put the damsel to suspicious flight,  
 Which must not be, for that's against my course;  
 I under a fair pretence of friendly ends, 160  
 And well-plac'd words of glozing courtesy,  
 Baited with reasons not unplausible,

Wind me into the easy-hearted man,  
And hug him into snares. When once her eye  
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust, 165  
I shall appear some harmless villager  
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.  
But here she comes; I fairly step aside  
And hearken, if I may, her business here.

*The LADY enters.*

*Lady.* This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,  
My best guide now; methought it was the sound 171  
Of riot, and ill-manag'd merriment;  
Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe  
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,  
When for their teeming flocks, and granges full, 175  
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,  
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth  
To meet the rudeness, and swill'd insolence  
Of such late wassailers; yet O where else  
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet 180  
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd wood?  
My brothers when they saw me wearied out  
With this long way, resolving here to lodge  
Under the spreading favour of these pines,  
Stept, as they said, to the next thicket side 185  
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit  
As the kind hospitable woods provide.  
They left me then, when the gray-hooded Ev'n,  
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,  
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain. 190  
But where they are, and why they came not back,  
Is now the labour of my thoughts; 'tis likeliest



They had engag'd their wandring steps too far,  
And envious Darkness, ere they could return,  
Had stole them from me; else O thievish Night, 195  
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,  
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,  
That Nature hung in Heav'n, and fill'd their lamps  
With everlasting oil, to give due light  
To the misled and lonely traveller? 200  
This is the place, as well as I may guess,  
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth  
Was rife, and perfect in my list'ning ear,  
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.  
What might this be? A thousand fantasies 205  
Begin to throng into my memory  
Of calling shapes, and beckning shadows dire,  
And airy tongues, that syllable men's names  
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.  
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound 210  
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended  
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.—  
O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,  
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,  
And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity! 215  
I see ye visibly, and now believe  
That he, the Supreme good, t' whom all things ill  
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
Would send a glist'ring guardian, if need were,  
To keep my life and honour unassail'd. 220  
Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?  
I did not err, there does a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,  
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove. 225

I cannot halloo to my brothers, but  
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest  
 I'll venture, for my new-enlivened spirits  
 Prompt me; and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph, that liv'st unseen 230  
 Within thy airy shell  
 By slow Meander's margent green;  
 And in the violet embroider'd vale,  
 Where the love-lorn nightingale  
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well: 235  
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair  
 That liketh thy Narcissus are?  
 O if thou have  
 Hid them in some flow'ry cave,  
 Tell me but where, 240  
 Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere;  
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,  
 And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies.

*Comus.* Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould  
 Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment? 245  
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,  
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air  
 To testify his hidden residence;  
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings  
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night 250  
 At every fall smoothing the raven down  
 Of Darkness till it smil'd: I have oft heard  
 My mother Circe with the Sirens three,  
 Amidst the flowery-kirtl'd Naiades

Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs; 255  
Who as they sang, would take the prison'd soul  
And lap it in Elysium; Scylla wept,  
And chid her barking waves into attention;  
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause:  
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense, 260  
And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;  
But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,  
Such sober certainty of waking bliss  
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,  
And she shall be my queen. Hail foreign wonder,  
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed; 265  
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine  
Dwell'st here with Pan, or Sylvan, by blest song  
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog  
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood. 270

*Lady.* Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise  
That is addressed to unattending ears;  
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift  
How to regain my sever'd company,  
Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo 275  
To give me answer from her mossy couch.

*Com.* What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

*Lady.* Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

*Com.* Could that divide you from near-ushering  
guides?

*Lady.* They left me weary on a grassy turf. 280

*Com.* By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

*Lady.* To seek i' th' valley some cool friendly spring.

*Com.* And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?

*Lady.* They were but twain, and purpos'd quick  
return.

*Com.* Perhaps forestalling night prevented them. 285

*Lady.* How easy my misfortune is to hit!

*Com.* Imports their loss, beside the present need.

*Lady.* No less than if I should my brothers lose.

*Com.* Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

*Lady.* As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips. 290

*Com.* Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox  
In his loose traces from the furrow came,  
And the swink'd hedger at his supper sate;  
I saw them under a green mantling vine  
That crawls along the side of yon small hill, 295  
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots,  
Their port was more than human, as they stood;  
I took it for a faëry vision  
Of some gay creatures of the element  
That in the colours of the rainbow live, 300  
And play i' th' plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,  
And as I past, I worshipt; if those you seek,  
It were a journey like the path to Heav'n,  
To help you find them.

*Lady.* Gentle villager,

What readiest way would bring me to that place? 305

*Comus.* Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

*Lady.* To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,  
In such a scant allowance of star-light,  
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,  
Without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet. 310

*Comus.* I know each lane, and every alley green,  
Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,  
And every bosky bourn from side to side,  
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood:  
And if your stray attendance be yet lodg'd, 315  
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know  
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark

From her thatch'd pallet rouse; if otherwise,  
I can conduct you, lady, to a low  
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe 320  
Till further quest.

*Lady.* Shepherd, I take thy word,  
And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,  
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds  
With smoky rafters, than in tap'stry halls  
In courts of princes, where it first was nam'd, 325  
And yet is most pretended: in a place  
Less warranted than this, or less secure,  
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.  
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial  
To my proportion'd strength. Shepherd, lead on. 330  
(*Exeunt.*)

*Enter the TWO BROTHERS.*

*El. Br.* Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou fair Moon  
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,  
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,  
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here  
In double night of darkness, and of shades; 335  
Or if your influence be quite damm'd up  
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,  
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole  
Of some clay habitation, visit us  
With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light, 340  
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,  
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

*Second Brother.* Or if our eyes  
Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear  
The folded flocks penn'd in their wattled cotes,

Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops, 345  
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock  
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,  
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering  
In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.  
But O that hapless virgin our lost sister, 350  
Where may she wander now, whither betake her  
From the chill dew, among the rude burs and thistles?  
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,  
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm  
Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears. 355  
What if in wild amazement, and affright,  
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp  
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

*Elder Brother.* Peace, brother, be not over-exquisite  
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils; 360  
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,  
{ What need a man forestall his date of grief,  
{ And run to meet what he would most avoid?  
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,  
How bitter is such self-delusion? 365  
I do not think my sister so to seek,  
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,  
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,  
As that the single want of light and noise  
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not), 370  
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,  
And put them into misbecoming plight.  
{ Virtue could see to do what Virtue would  
{ By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
{ Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self 375  
{ Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude;  
{ Where with her best nurse Contemplation,

She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,  
That in the various bustle of resort  
Were all to-ruffl'd and sometimes impair'd. 380  
He that has light within his own clear breast  
May sit i' th' centre, and enjoy bright day;  
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,  
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;  
Himself is his own dungeon.

*Second Brother.* 'Tis most true 385  
That musing Meditation most affects  
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,  
Far from the cheerful haunt of men, and herds,  
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;  
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds, 390  
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,  
Or do his gray hairs any violence?  
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree  
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard  
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye, 395  
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit  
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.

You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps  
Of misers' treasure by an out-law's den,  
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope 400  
Danger will wink on Opportunity,  
And let a single helpless maiden pass  
Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.  
Of night, or loneliness it recks me not;  
I fear the dread events that dog them both, 405  
Lest some ill greeting touch attempt the person  
Of our unowned sister.

*Elder Brother.* I do not, brother,  
Infer, as if I thought my sister's state

Secure without all doubt, or controversy:  
Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear 410  
Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is  
That I incline to hope, rather than fear,  
And gladly banish squint suspicion.  
My sister is not so defenceless left  
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength 415  
Which you remember not.

*Second Brother.* What hidden strength.

Unless the strength of Heav'n, if you mean that?

*El. Br.* I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength  
Which if Heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own:  
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity: 420

She that has that, is clad in complete steel,  
And like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen  
May trace huge forests, and unharbour'd heaths,  
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;  
Where through the sacred rays of chastity, 425

No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer  
Will dare to soil her virgin purity;  
Yea there, where very desolation dwells  
By grots, and cavern shagg'd with horrid shades,  
She may pass on with unblench'd majesty; 430

Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.  
Some say, no evil thing that walks by night  
In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,  
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost  
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time, 435

No goblin, or swart faëry of the mine,  
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.  
Do ye believe me not, or shall I call  
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece  
To testify the arms of chastity? 440



Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,  
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,  
Wherewith she tam'd the brinded lioness  
And spotted mountain pard, but set at naught  
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men 445  
Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen o' th' woods  
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield  
That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,  
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congeal'd stone?  
But rigid looks of chaste austerity, 450  
And noble grace that dash'd brute violence  
With sudden adoration, and blank awe.  
So dear to Heav'n is saintly chastity,  
That when a soul is found sincerely so,  
A thousand liveried angels lackey her, 455  
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;  
And in clear dream, and solemn vision,  
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,  
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants  
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape, 460  
The unpolluted temple of the mind,  
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,  
Till all be made immortal: but when lust  
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,  
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin, 465  
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,  
The soul grows clotted by contagion,  
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose  
The divine property of her first being.  
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp 470  
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres  
Lingering, and sitting by a new-made grave;  
As loth to leave the body that it lov'd,

And link'd itself by carnal sensuality  
To a degenerate and degraded state. 475

*Second Brother.* How charming is divine philosophy!  
Not harsh, and crabbed as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

*Elder Brother.* List, list, I hear 480  
Some far off halloo break the silent air.

*Second Brother.* Methought so too; what should it be?

*Elder Brother.* For certain  
Either some one like us night-founder'd here,  
Or else some neighbour woodman, or at worst,  
Some roving robber calling to his fellows. 485

*Sec. Br.* Heav'n keep my sister! Again, again, and  
near;  
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.

*Elder Brother.* I'll halloo;  
If he be friendly he comes well; if not,  
Defence is a good cause, and Heav'n be for us.

*Enter the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, habited like a shepherd.*

That halloo I should know, what are you? speak; 490  
Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else.

*Spirit.* What voice is that? my young lord? speak  
again.

*Sec. Br.* O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.

*El. Br.* Thyrsis? Whose artful strains have oft  
delay'd

The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, 495  
And sweeten'd every muskrose of the dale;  
How cam'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram

Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,  
 Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?  
 How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook? 500

*Spirit.* O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,  
 I came not here on such a trivial toy  
 As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth  
 Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth  
 That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought 505  
 To this my errand, and the care it brought.  
 But O my virgin lady, where is she?  
 How chance she is not in your company?

*El. Br.* To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame,  
 Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. 510

*Spirit.* Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

*El. Br.* What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly  
 shew.

*Spirit.* I'll tell ye; 'tis not vain, or fabulous,  
 ('Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance,)  
 What the sage poets taught by th' heav'nly Muse, 515  
 Storied of old in high immortal verse  
 Of dire chiméras and enchanted isles,  
 And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell;  
 For such there be, but unbelief is blind.

Within the navel of this hideous wood, 520  
 Immur'd in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells,  
 Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,  
 Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;  
 And here to every thirsty wanderer,  
 By sly enticement gives his baneful cup, 525  
 With many murmurs mixt; whose pleasing poison  
 The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,  
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast  
 Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage,

Character'd in the face; this have I learnt 530  
Tending my flocks hard by i' th' hilly crofts,  
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night  
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl  
Like stabl'd wolves, or tigers at their prey,  
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate 535  
In their obscured haunts of inmost bow'rs.  
Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells  
To inveigle and invite th' unwary sense  
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.  
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks 540  
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb  
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,  
I sate me down to watch upon a bank  
With ivy canopied, and interwove  
With flaunting honeysuckle; and began, 545  
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,  
To meditate my rural minstrelsy  
Till fancy had her fill; but ere a close,  
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,  
And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance; 550  
At which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,  
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence  
Gave respite to the drowsy frightened steeds  
That draw the litter of close-curtain'd Sleep.  
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound 555  
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,  
And stole upon the air, that even Silence  
Was took ere she was ware, and wish'd she might  
Deny her nature, and be never more  
Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,  
And took in strains that might create a soul 560  
Under the ribs of Death; but O ere long

Too well did I perceive it was the voice  
 Of my most honour'd Lady, your dear sister.  
 Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear; 565  
 And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,  
 'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!'  
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,  
 Through paths, and turnings oft'n trod by day,  
 Till guided by mine ear I found the place, 570  
 Where that damn'd wizard hid in sly disguise  
 (For so by certain signs I knew) had met  
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,  
 The aidless innocent lady his wish'd prey;  
 Who gently ask'd if he had seen such two, 575  
 Supposing him some neighbour villager;  
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd  
 Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung  
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here,  
 But further know I not.

*Second Brother.* O night and shades, 580  
 How are ye join'd with hell in triple knot  
 Against th' unarmed weakness of one virgin  
 Alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence  
 You gave me, brother?

*Elder Brother.* Yes, and keep it still;  
 Lean on it safely, not a period 585  
 Shall be unsaid for me: against the threats  
 Of malice or of sorcery, or that power  
 Which erring man call Chance, this I hold firm:  
 \* Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,  
 Surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd; 590  
 Yea even that which Mischief meant most harm,  
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.  
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,

And mix no more with goodness, when at last  
Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself, 595  
It shall be in eternal restless change  
Self-fed, and self-consumed; if this fail,  
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,  
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on.  
Against th' opposing will and arm of Heav'n 600  
May never this just sword be lifted up;  
But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt  
With all the grisly legions that troop  
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,  
Harpies and hydras, or all the monstrous forms 605  
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,  
And force him to return his purchase back,  
Or drag him by the curls, to a foul death,  
Curs'd as his life.

*Spirit.* Alas, good ventrous youth,  
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise, 610  
But here thy sword can do thee little stead;  
Far other arms, and other weapons must  
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms;  
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,  
And crumble all thy sinews. 615

*Elder Brother.* Why prithee, shepherd,  
How durst thou then approach so near  
As to make this relation?

*Spirit.* Care and utmost shifts  
How to secure the lady from surprisal,  
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad  
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd 620  
In every virtuous plant and healing herb  
That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray;  
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,

Which when I did, he on the tender grass  
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy; 625  
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,  
And show me simples of a thousand names,  
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties:  
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,  
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out; 630  
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,  
But in another country, as he said,  
Bore a bright golden flow'r, but not in this soil:  
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain  
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon; 635  
And yet more med'cinal is it than that mōly  
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;  
He call'd it hæmony, and gave it to me,  
And bade me keep it as of sovran use  
{ 'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp, 640  
{ Or ghastly furies' apparition;  
I purst it up, but little reck'ning made,  
Till now that this extremity compell'd,  
But now I find it true; for by this means  
I knew the foul enchanter though disguis'd, 645  
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,  
And yet came off: if you have this about you  
(As I will give you when we go), you may  
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;  
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood, 650  
And brandisht blade rush on him, break his glass,  
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,  
But seize his wand; though he and his curst crew  
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,  
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke, 655  
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

*El. Br.* Thyrsis lead on apace, I'll follow thee;  
And some good angel bear a shield before us.

*The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness; soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS appears with his rabble, and the LADY set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

## COMUS

Nay lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,  
Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster, 660  
And you a statue; or as Daphne was  
Rootbound, that fled Apollo.

*Lady.* Fool, do not boast;  
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind  
With all thy charms; although this corporal rind  
Thou hast immanac'd, while Heav'n sees good. 665

*Comus.* Why are you vext, lady? why do you frown?  
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates  
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures  
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,  
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns 670  
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.  
And first behold this cordial julep here,  
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,  
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixt.  
Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone 675  
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,  
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,  
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.  
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,



And to those dainty limbs which Nature lent 680  
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?  
But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,  
And harshly deal like an ill borrower  
With that which you receiv'd on other terms;  
Scorning the unexempt condition 685  
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,  
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain;  
That have been tir'd all day without repast,  
And timely rest have wanted; but, fair virgin,  
This will restore all soon.

*Lady.* 'Twill not, false traitor; 690  
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty  
That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.  
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode  
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,  
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me! 695  
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver  
Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence  
With visor'd falsehood, and base forgery,  
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here  
With lickerish baits fit to ensnare a brute? 700  
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,  
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none  
But such as are good men, can give good things,  
And that which is not good, is not delicious  
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite. 705

*Comus.* O foolishness of men! that lend their ears  
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,  
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,  
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence.  
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth, 710  
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,

Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,  
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,  
But all to please, and sate the curious taste?  
And set to work millions of spinning worms, 715  
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk  
To deck her sons; and that no corner might  
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins  
She hutch'd th' all-worshipt ore, and precious gems  
To store her children with; if all the world 720  
Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,  
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,  
Th' All-giver would be unthankt, would be unprais'd  
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd;  
And we should serve him as a grudging master, 725  
As a penurious niggard of his wealth;  
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,  
Who would be quite surcharg'd with her own weight.  
And strangl'd with her waste fertility,  
Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air darkt with  
plumes; 730  
The herds would over-multitude their lords,  
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and th' unsought  
diamonds  
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,  
And so bestud with stars, that they below  
Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last 735  
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.  
List, lady; be not coy, and be not cozen'd  
With that same vaunted name Virginity;  
Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,  
But must be current; and the good thereof 740  
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,  
Unsavoury in th' enjoyment of itself:

If you let slip time, like a neglected rose  
It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.  
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown 745  
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,  
Where most may wonder at the workmanship;  
It is for homely features to keep home,  
They had their name thence; coarse complexions  
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply 750  
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.  
What need a vermeil-tinctur'd lip for that,  
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?  
There was another meaning in these gifts;  
Think what, and be advis'd; you are but young yet.

*Lady.* I had not thought to have unlockt my lips 756  
In this unhallow'd air, but that this juggler  
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,  
Obtruding false rules pranked in Reason's garb.  
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments, 760  
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride:  
Impostor, do not charge most innocent Nature,  
As if she would her children should be riotous  
With her abundance: she, good cateress,  
Means her provision only to the good, 765  
That live according to her sober laws  
And holy dictate of spare Temperance:  
If every just man that now pines with want  
Had but a moderate and beseeming share  
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd Luxury 770  
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,  
Nature's full blessings would be well dispenst  
In unsuperfluous even proportion,  
And she no wit encumber'd with her store;  
And then the Giver would be better thanked, 775

His praise due paid; for swinish Gluttony  
Ne'er looks to Heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,  
But with besotted base ingratitude  
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?  
Or have I said enough? To him that dares 780  
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous word!  
Against the sun-clad power of Chastity,  
Fain would I something say, yet to what end?  
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul to apprehend  
The sublime notion, and high mystery 785  
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage  
And serious doctrine of Virginity;  
And thou art worthy that thou shouldest not know  
More happiness than this thy present lot.  
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric 790  
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence,  
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced:  
Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth  
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits  
To such a flame of sacred vehemence, 795  
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,  
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake.  
Till all thy magic structures rear'd so high,  
Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

*Comus.* She fables not, I feel that I do fear 800  
Her words set off by some superior power;  
And though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew  
Dips me all o'er; as when the wrath of Jove  
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus  
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble, 805  
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no more;  
This is mere moral babble, and direct  
Against the canon laws of our foundation;

I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees  
 And settlings of a melancholy blood; 810  
 But this will cure all straight; one sip of this  
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight  
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

*The BROTHERS rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground; his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The ATTENDANT SPIRIT comes in.*

### SPIRIT

What have you let the false enchanter scape?  
 O ye mistook; ye should have snatch'd his wand 815  
 And bound him fast; without his rod reverst,  
 And backward mutters of dissevering power,  
 We cannot free the lady that sits here  
 In stony fetters fixt, and motionless;  
 Yet stay, be not disturb'd; now I bethink me, 820  
 Some other means I have which may be us'd,  
 Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,  
 The soothest shepherd that e'er pip'd on plains.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,  
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream  
 Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure, 826  
 Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,  
 That had the sceptre from his father Brute.  
 She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit  
 Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen, 830  
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood  
 That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.  
 The water-nymphs that in the bottom play'd,

Held up their pearled wrists and took her in,  
 Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall; 835  
 Who piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,  
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe  
 In nectar'd lavers strew'd with asphodel,  
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense  
 Dropt in ambrosial oils; till she reviv'd, 840  
 And underwent a quick immortal change  
 Made goddess of the river; still she retains  
 Her maid'n gentleness, and oft at eve  
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,  
 Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs 845  
 That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,  
 Which she with precious vial'd liquors heals.  
 For which the shepherds at their festivals  
 Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,  
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream 850  
 Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.  
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock  
 The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,  
 If she be right invok'd in warbled song;  
 Fair maid'nhood she loves, and will be swift 855  
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,  
 In hard-besetting need; this will I try,  
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.

### SONG

Sabrina fair,  
 Listen where thou art sitting 860  
 Under the grassy, cool, translucent wave;  
 In twisted braids of lilies knitting  
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;  
 Listen for dear honour's sake,

Goddess of the silver lake, 865

Listen and save.

Listen and appear to us

In name of great Oceanus,

By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,

And Tethys grave majestic pace, 870

By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,

And the Carpathian wizard's hook,

By scaly Triton's winding shell,

And old sooth-saying Glaucus' spell,

By Leucothea's lovely hands, 875

And her son that rules the strands,

By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,

And the songs of Sirens sweet,

By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,

And fair Ligea's golden comb, 880

Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,

Sleeking her soft alluring locks,

By all the nymphs that nightly dance

Upon thy streams with wily glance,

Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head 885

From thy coral-pav'n bed,

And bridle in thy headlong wave,

Till thou our summons answer'd have.

Listen and save.

*ABRINA rises, attended by Water-Nymphs, and sings*

By the rushy-fringed bank, 890

Where grows the willow and the osier dank,

My sliding chariot stays;

Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen

Of turkis blue, and em'rald green

That in the channel strays; 895  
 Whilst from off the waters fleet,  
 Thus I set my printless feet  
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,  
 That bends not as I tread;  
 Gentle swain, at thy request 900  
 I am here.

*Spirit.* Goddess dear,  
 We implore thy powerful hand  
 To undo the charmed band  
 Of true virgin here distrest, 905  
 Through the force, and through the wile  
 Of unblest enchanter vile.

*Sabrina.* Shepherd, 'tis my office best  
 To help ensnared chastity;  
 Brightest lady, look on me; 910  
 Thus I sprinkle on your breast  
 Drops that from my fountain pure,  
 I have kept of precious cure,  
 Thrice upon thy finger'd tip,  
 Thrice upon thy rubied lip; 915  
 Next this marble venom'd seat  
 Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat  
 I touch with chaste palms moist and cold;  
 Now the spell hath lost his hold;  
 And I must haste ere morning hour 920  
 To wait in Amphitrite's bow'r.

*SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat*

*Spirit.* Virgin, daughter of Locrine,  
 Sprung of old Anchises' line,  
 May thy brimmed waves for this



Their full tribute never miss 925  
From a thousand petty rills,  
That tumble down the snowy hills;  
Summer drouth, or singed air  
Never scorch thy tresses fair;  
Nor wet October's torrent flood 930  
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;  
May thy billows roll ashore  
The beryl, and the golden ore;  
May thy lofty head be crown'd  
With many a tower and terrace round, 935  
And here and there thy banks upon  
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Come lady, while Heaven lends us grace  
Let us fly this cursed place,  
Lest the sorcerer us entice 940  
With some other new device.  
Not a waste, or needless sound  
Till we come to holier ground;  
I shall be your faithful guide  
Through this gloomy covert wide; 945  
And not many furlongs thence  
Is your father's residence,  
Where this night are met in state  
Many a friend to gratulate  
His wish'd presence; and beside, 950  
All the swains that there abide,  
With jigs, and rural dance resort;  
We shall catch them at their sport,  
And our sudden coming there  
Will double all thy mirth and cheer; 955  
Come let us haste, the stars grow high,  
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

*The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow town, and the President's castle; then come in country Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, with the Two BROTHERS, and the LADY.*

### SONG.

*Spirit.* Back Shepherds, back, enough your  
                   play,  
 Till next sun-shine holiday;  
 Here be without duck or nod 960  
 Other trippings to be trod  
 Of lighter toes; and such court guise  
 As Mercury did first devise  
 With the mincing Dryades  
 On the lawns, and on the leas. 965

*This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.*

Noble lord, and lady bright,  
 I have brought ye new delight;  
 Here behold so goodly grown  
 Three fair branches of your own;  
 Heav'n hath timely tried their youth, 970  
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth;  
 And sent them here through hard assays  
 With a crown of deathless praise,  
 To triumph in victorious dance  
 O'er sensual Folly, and Intemperance. 975

*The dances ended, the SPIRIT epiloguizes.*

*Spirit.* To the ocean now I fly,  
And those happy climes that lie  
Where day never shuts his eye,  
Up in the broad fields of the sky:  
There I suck the liquid air 980  
All amidst the gardens fair  
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three  
That sing about the golden tree;  
Along the crisped shades and bowers  
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring; 985  
The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,  
Thither all their bounties bring,  
That there eternal summer dwells;  
And west winds, with musky wing  
About the cedarn alleys fling 990  
Nard, and Cassia's balmy smells.  
Iris there with humid bow,  
Waters the odorous banks that blow  
Flowers of more mingled hue  
'Than her purfl'd scarf can shew; 995  
And drenches with Elysian dew  
(List mortals, if your ears be true)  
Beds of hyacinth and roses,  
Where young Adonis oft reposes,  
Waxing well of his deep wound 1000  
In slumber soft; and on the ground  
Sadly sits th' Assyrian queen:  
But far above in spangled sheen  
Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc'd,  
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranc'd, 1005  
After her wand'ring labours long;

Till free consent the gods among  
Make her his eternal bride;  
And from her fair unspotted side  
Two blissful twins are to be born, 1010  
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done,  
I can fly, or I can run  
Quickly to the green earth's end,  
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend, 1015  
And from thence can soar as soon  
To the corners of the moon.

Mortals that would follow me,  
Love Virtue; she alone is free:  
She can teach ye how to climb 1020  
Higher than the sphery chime;  
Or if Virtue feeble were,  
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

## LYCIDAS.

*In this MONODY the Author bewails a learned friend, Edward  
unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester  
on the Irish seas, 1637. And by occasion foretells  
the ruin of our corrupted clergy then in their height.*

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never-sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
(And with forc'd fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.) 5  
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,  
Compels me to disturb your season due:  
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,  
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:  
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew 10  
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.  
He must not float upon his wat'ry bier  
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
Without the meed of some melodious tear.  
Begin then, sisters of the sacred well, 15  
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;  
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string:  
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,  
So may some gentle Muse  
With lucky words favour my destin'd urn; 20  
And as he passes turn,  
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud,  
For we were nurst upon the self-same hill,

Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.  
Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd 25  
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,  
We drove afield; and both together heard  
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,  
Oft till the star that rose at ev'ning, bright, 30  
Toward Heav'ns descent had slop'd his westering  
wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,  
Temper'd to th' oaten flute;  
Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel  
From the glad song would not be absent long, 35  
And old Damœtas lov'd to hear our song.

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone, and never must return!  
Thee shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves,  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, 40  
And all their echoes mourn.

The willows and the hazel copses green,  
Shall now no more be seen,  
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays:  
As killing as the canker to the rose, 45  
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,  
When first the white-thorn blows;  
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep  
Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas? 51  
For neither were ye playing on the steep,  
Where your old bards, the famous Druids lie,  
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream: 55

Ay me, I fondly dream!

Had ye been there . . . for what could that have done

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,

The Muse herself, for her enchanting son

Whom universal Nature did lament; 60

When by the rout that made the hideous roar,

His gory visage down the stream was sent,

Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

— Alas! what boots it with incessant care

To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade, 65

And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?

Were it not better done as others use,

To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,

Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise 70

(That last infirmity of noble mind),

To scorn delights, and live laborious days;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,

And think to burst out into sudden blaze,

Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears, 75

And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'

Phœbus replied, and touch'd my trembling ears;

'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,

Nor in the glistering foil

Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumour lies; 80

But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,

And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;

As he pronounces lastly on each deed,

Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.'

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd flood, 85

Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,

That strain I heard was of a higher mood:

But now my oat proceeds.

And listens to the herald of the sea  
That came in Neptune's plea; 90  
He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds,  
What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain!  
And question'd every gust of rugged wings  
That blows from off each beaked promontory;  
They knew not of his story, 95  
And sage Hippotades their answer brings;  
That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd,  
The air was calm, and on the level brine  
Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.  
It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100  
Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,  
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,  
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,  
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge 105  
Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.  
'Ah! who hath reft (quoth he) my dearest pledge?'  
Last came, and last did go,  
The pilot of the Galilean lake;  
Two massy keys he bore, of metals twain, 110  
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain)  
He shook his mitr'd locks, and stern bespake:  
'How well could I have spar'd for thee, young swain.  
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake,  
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold? 115  
Of other care they little reck'ning make,  
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,  
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.  
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to  
hold  
A sheephook, or have learn'd aught else the least 120



That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!  
What reck's it them? What need they! They are sped;  
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;  
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, 125  
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:  
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
Daily devours apace, and nothing said;  
But that two-handed engine at the door 130  
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.]

Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past,  
That shrunk thy streams; return Sicilian Muse,  
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast  
Their bells, and flowrets of a thousand hues. 135  
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use  
Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,  
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,  
Throw thither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,  
That on the green turf suck the honied show'rs, 140  
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.  
Bring the rāthe primrose that forsaken dies,  
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,  
The white pink, and the pansy freakt with jet,  
The glowing violet, 145  
The musk-rose, and the well attir'd woodbine;  
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:  
Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150  
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.  
For so to interpose a little ease,  
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.

Ay me! whilst thee the shores, and sounding seas  
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurl'd; 155  
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
Vist'st the bottom of the monstrous world;  
Or whether thou to our moist denied,  
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, 160  
Where the great vision of the guarded mount  
Looks toward Namancos, and Bayona's hold;  
Look homeward Angel now, and melt with ruth.  
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more; 165  
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,  
Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor;  
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed;  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore 170  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:  
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,  
Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves:  
Where other groves and other streams along,  
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175  
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,  
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
There entertain him all the saints above,  
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,  
That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180  
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.  
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;  
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,  
In thy large recompense; and shalt be good  
To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,

7 While the still morn went out with sandals gray;  
 He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,  
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:  
 And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills, 190  
 And now was dropt into the western bay;  
 At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue:  
 To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

## ALEXANDER'S FEAST;

OR

## THE POWER OF MUSIC

Twas at the royal feast for Persia won  
 By Philip's warlike son—  
 Aloft in awful state  
 The godlike hero sate  
 On his imperial throne; 5  
 His valiant peers were placed around,  
 Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound  
 (So should desert in arms be crown'd);  
 The lovely Thais by his side  
 Sate like a blooming Eastern bride 10  
 In flower of youth and beauty's pride:—  
 Happy, happy, happy pair!  
 None but the brave  
 None but the brave  
 None but the brave deserves the fair! 15

## CHORUS

*Happy, happy, happy pair!*  
*None but the brave,*  
*None but the brave,*  
*None but the brave deserves the fair.*

Timotheus placed on high 20  
 Amid the tuneful quire  
 With flying fingers touch'd the lyre;  
 The trembling notes ascend the sky

And heavenly joys inspire.  
 The song began from Jove 25  
 Who left his blissful seats above—  
 Such is the power of mighty love!  
 A dragon's fiery form belied the god;  
 Sublime on radiant spires he rode  
 When he to fair Olympia prest, 30  
 And while he sought her snowy breast,  
 Then round her slender waist he curl'd,  
 And stamp'd an image of himself, a sovereign of the  
 world.  
 The listening crowd admire the lofty sound!  
 A present diety! they shout around: *ap?* 35  
 A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound!  
 With ravish'd ears  
 The monarch hears,  
 Assumes the god;  
 Affects to nod 40  
 And seems to shake the spheres.

## CHORUS

*With ravish'd ears*  
*The monarch hears,*  
*Assumes the God,*  
*Affects to nod,* 45  
*And seems to shake the spheres.*

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,  
 Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:  
 The jolly god in triumph comes!  
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums! 50  
 Flush'd with a purple grace  
 He shows his honest face:

Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes  
 Bacchus, ever fair and young,  
 Drinking joys did first ordain; 55  
 Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,  
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure,  
 Rich the treasure,  
 Sweet the pleasure,  
 Sweet is pleasure after pain. 60

## CHORUS

*Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,  
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;  
 Rich the treasure,  
 Sweet the pleasure,  
 Sweet is pleasure after pain. 65*

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;  
 Fought all his battles o'er again,  
 And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew  
 the slain!  
 The master saw the madness rise,  
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes; 70  
 And while he Heaven and Earth defied  
 Changed his hand and check'd his pride.  
 He chose a mournful Muse  
 Soft pity to infuse:  
 He sung Darius great and good, 75  
 By too severe a fate  
 Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,  
 Fallen from his high estate,  
 And weltering in his blood;  
 Deserted, at his utmost need, 80  
 By those his former bounty fed;

On the bare earth exposed he lies  
 With not a friend to close his eyes.  
 With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,  
 Revolving in his alter'd soul 85  
 The various turns of Chance below;  
 And now and then a sigh he stole,  
 And tears began to flow.

## CHORUS

*Revolving in his alter'd soul*  
*The various turns of chance below;* 90  
*And, now and then, a sigh he stole,*  
*And tears began to flow.*

The mighty master smiled to see  
 That love was in the next degree;  
 'Twas but a kindred-sound to move, 95  
 For pity melts the mind to love.  
 Softly sweet, in Lydian measures  
 Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.  
 War, he sung, is toil and trouble,  
 Honour but an empty bubble; 100  
 Never ending, still beginning,  
 Fighting still, and still destroying;  
 If the world be worth thy winning,  
 Think, O think, it worth enjoying:  
 Lovely Thais sits beside thee, 105  
 Take the good the gods provide thee!  
 The many rend the skies with loud applause;  
 So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.  
 The prince, unable to conceal his pain.  
 Gazed on the fair 110  
 Who caused his care,

And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,  
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:  
 At length with love and wine at once opprest  
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast. 115

## CHORUS

*The prince, unable to conceal his pain,  
 Gazed on the fair  
 Who caused his care,  
 And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,  
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again; 120  
 At length, with love and wine at once opprest,  
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.*

Now strike the golden lyre again:  
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!  
 Break his bands of sleep asunder 125  
 And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.  
 Hark, hark! the horrid sound  
 Has raised up his head:  
 As awaked from the dead  
 And amazed he stares around. 130

Revenge, revenge, 'Timotheus cries,  
 See the Furies arise! *Divinities, Avengers of iniquity*

See the snakes that they rear  
 How they hiss in their hair,  
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes! 135

Behold a ghastly band,  
 Each a torch in his hand!  
 Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain  
 And unburied remain  
 Inglorious on the plain: 140  
 Give the vengeance due



To the valiant crew!  
 Behold how they toss their torches on high,  
 How they point to the Persian abodes  
 And glittering temples of their hostile gods. 145  
 The princes applaud with a furious joy:  
 And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy:  
 Thais led the way  
 To light him to his prey,  
 And like another Helen, fired another Troy! 150

## CHORUS

*And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;  
 Thais led the way,  
 To light him to his prey,  
 And like another Helen, fired another Troy.*

Thus, long ago, 155  
 Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,  
 While organs yet were mute,  
Timotheus, to his breathing flute  
 And sounding lyre  
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.  
 At last divine Cecilia came, 161  
 Inventress of the vocal frame;  
 The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store  
 Enlarged the former narrow bounds,  
 And added length to solemn sounds, 165  
 With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.  
 Let old Timotheus yield the prize  
 Or both divide the crown;  
 He raised a mortal to the skies;  
 She drew an angel down! 170

## GRAND CHORUS

*At last divine Cecilia came,  
 Inventress of the vocal frame;  
 The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,  
 Enlarged the former narrow bounds,  
 And added length to solemn sounds,* 175  
*With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.  
 Let old Timotheus yield the prize,  
 Or both divide the crown:  
 He raised a mortal to the skies;  
 She drew an angel down.* 180

*Just power, music  
 Describe the successive moods  
 of Alexander and Phil's in each  
 case the different moods used  
 by Timotheus to arouse them.*

## ELEGIAC STANZAS

*Written 7 years after the storm*  
SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A  
STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

(Composed 1805—Published 1807.)

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!  
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:  
I saw thee every day; and all the while  
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air! 5  
So like, so very like, was day to day!  
Whene'er I look'd, thy Image still was there;  
It trembled, but it never pass'd away.

How perfect was the calm! It seemed no sleep,  
No mood, which season takes away, or brings: 10  
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep  
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! then, if mine had been the Painter's hand,  
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,  
The light that never was, on sea or land, 15  
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile  
Amid a world how different from this!  
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;  
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss., 20

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine  
 Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—  
 Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine  
 The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease, 25  
 Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;  
 No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,  
 Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,  
 Such Picture would I at that time have made: 30  
 And seen the soul of truth in every part,  
 A steadfast peace that might not be betray'd.

So once it would have been—'tis so no more;  
 I have submitted to a new control:  
 A power is gone, which nothing can restore;  
 A deep distress hath humanized my Soul. 35

Not for a moment could I now behold  
 A smiling sea, and be what I have been:  
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;  
 This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the  
 friend,  
 If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,  
 This work of thine I blame not, but commend;  
 This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate work!—yet wise and well, 45  
 Well chosen is the spirit that is here;

That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,  
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,  
I love to see the look with which it braves, 50  
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,  
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,  
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!  
Such happiness, wherever it be known, 55  
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,  
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!  
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—  
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn. 60

*1. Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,  
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!  
Such happiness, wherever it be known,  
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.  
But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,  
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!  
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—  
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.*

*137. 52  
138. 13, 14, 15*

## LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON  
REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.  
JULY 13, 1798.

[Composed July 13, 1798.—Published 1798.]

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length  
Of five long winters! and again I hear  
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs  
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again  
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5  
That on a wild secluded scene impress  
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect  
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.  
The day is come when I again repose  
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10  
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts  
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,  
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves  
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see  
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines 15  
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,  
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke  
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!  
With some uncertain notice, as might seem  
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20  
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire  
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,  
 Through a long absence, have not been to me  
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:  
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din 25  
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,  
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet, <sup>①</sup>  
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;  
 And passing even into my purer mind, } *see notes*  
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too 30  
 ② Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,  
 As have no slight or trivial influence  
 On that best portion of a good man's life,  
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts  
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust, 35  
 To them I may have owed another gift,  
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood, <sup>③</sup>  
 In which the burden of the mystery,  
 In which the heavy and the weary weight  
 Of all this unintelligible world, 40  
 Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,  
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—  
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
 And even the motion of our human blood  
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep, 45  
 In body, and become a living soul:  
 While with an eye made quiet by the power  
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
 We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft— 50  
 In darkness and amid the many shapes  
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir  
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,

Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—  
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, 55  
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,  
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,  
With many recognitions dim and faint,  
And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60  
The picture of the mind revives again:  
While here I stand, not only with the sense  
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts  
That in this moment there is life and food  
For future years. [And so I dare to hope, 65  
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when  
first

*passage* I came among these hills; when like a roe  
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides  
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,  
Wherever nature led: more like a man 70  
Flying from something that he dreads than one  
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then  
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,  
And their glad animal movements all gone by) *recollection*  
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint 75  
What then I was. The sounding cataract  
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,  
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
Their colours and their forms, were then to me  
An appetite; a feeling and a love, 80  
{ That had no need of a remoter charm,  
By thought supplied, nor any interest  
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,  
And all its aching joys are now no more,



And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this 85  
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts  
 Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,  
 Abundant recompense. For I have learned  
 To look on nature, not as in the hour  
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often-times ① 90  
 The still, sad music of humanity,  
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy ②  
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime 95  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels 100  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still  
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
 And mountains; and of all that we behold  
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world 105  
 Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,  
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
 In nature and the language of the sense  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul 110  
 Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,  
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more  
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay:  
 For thou art with me here upon the banks  
 Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend, 115  
 My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch

The language of my former heart, and read  
My former pleasures in the shooting lights  
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while  
May I behold in thee what I was once, 120  
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,  
Knowing that Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,  
Through all the years of this our life, to lead  
From joy to joy: for she can so inform 125  
The mind that is within us, so impress  
With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,  
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all 130  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold  
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon  
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk; 135  
And let the misty mountain-winds be free  
To blow against thee: and, in after years,  
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured  
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind  
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, 140  
Thy memory be as a dwelling place  
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,  
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,  
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts  
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me, 145  
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—  
If I should be where I no more can hear  
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams  
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget

That on the banks of this delightful stream 150  
We stood together; and that I, so long  
A worshipper of Nature, hither came  
Unwearied in that service: rather say  
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal  
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget 155  
That after many wanderings, many years  
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,  
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me  
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake .

# LACHIN Y GAIR

(a mountain)

Away, ye gay landscāpes, ye gārdens ōf rōses!

In yōu lēt the mīnions ōf lūxūry rōve;  
Rēstore mē the rōcks, whēre the snōw-flāke rēposēs,  
Thōugh still they āre śācred tō frēedom and lōve:  
Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains 5

Round their white summits though elements war;  
Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-flowing foun-  
tains,

I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wander'd;  
My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid; 10  
On chieftains long perish'd my memory ponder'd,  
As daily I strode through the pine-cover'd glade;  
I sought not my home till the day's dying glory  
Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star;  
For fancy was cheer'd by traditional story, 15  
Disclosed by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.

"Shades of the dead! have I not heard your voices  
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale?"  
Surely the soul of the hero rejoices, 19  
And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale.  
Round Loch na Garr while the stormy mist gathers,  
Winter presides in his cold icy car:  
Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers;  
They dwell in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr

"Ill-starr'd, though brave, did no visions foreboding  
Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause?" 26

Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden,

Victory crown'd not your fall with applause:  
Still were you happy in death's earthly slumber,

You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar;  
The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud number, 31

Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

Years have roll'd on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,

Years must elapse ere I tread you again:

Nature of verdure and flow'rs has bereft you, 35

Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain. *England*

{ England! thy beauties are tame and domestic

To one who has roved o'er the mountains afar:

Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic!

The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr. 40

*The poet's isolation for the time being.*

*(1) The poet's isolation for the time being.*

*(2) The poet's isolation for the time being.*

## AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE OF  
KARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN.

KARSHISH, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,  
 The not-incurious in God's handiwork  
 (This man's-flesh He hath admirably made,  
 Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,  
 To coop up and keep down on earth a space 5  
 That puff of vapour from His mouth, man's soul)  
 — To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,  
 Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,  
 Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks  
 Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain,  
 Whereby the wily vapour fain would slip  
 Back and rejoin its source before the term,—  
 And aptest in contrivance, under God,  
 To baffle it by deftly stopping such:—  
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home 15  
 Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with  
 peace)  
 Three samples of true snake-stone—rarer still,  
 One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,  
 (But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs)  
 And writeth now the twenty-second time. 20

My journeyings were brought to Jericho:  
 Thus I resume. Who studious in our art  
 Shall count a little labour unrepaid?  
 I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone

On many a flinty furlong of this land. 25  
Also, the country-side is all on fire  
With rumours of a marching hitherward:  
Some say Vespasian cometh, some, his son.  
A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear;  
Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls: 30  
I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.  
Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,  
And once a town declared me for a spy,  
But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,  
Since this poor covert where I pass the night, 35  
This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence  
A man with plague-sores at the third degree  
Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest here!  
'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,  
To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip 40  
And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.  
A viscid choler is observable  
In tertians, I was nearly bold to say,  
And falling-sickness hath a happier cure  
Than our school wots of: there's a spider here 45  
Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,  
Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-grey back;/  
Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his  
mind,  
The Syrian run-a-gate I trust this to ?  
His service payeth me a sublimate 50  
Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.  
Best wait: I reach Jerusalem at morn,  
There set in order my experiences,  
Gather what most deserves, and give thee all—  
Or I might add, Judaea's gum-tragacanth 55  
Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,

Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,  
In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease  
Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy—  
Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar— 60  
But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay: my Syrian blinketh gratefully,  
Protesteth his devotion is my price—  
Suppose I write what harms not, though he steal ?  
I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush, 65  
What set me off a-writing first of all.  
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang  
For, be it this town's barrenness—or else  
The man had something in the look of him—  
His case has struck me far more than 'tis worth. 70  
So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose  
In the great press of novelty at hand  
The care and pains this somehow stole from me)  
I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,  
Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have the truth ?  
The very man is gone from me but now, 75  
Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.  
Thus then, and let thy better wit help all.

'Tis but a case of mania—subinduced  
By epilepsy, at the turning-point 80  
Of trance prolonged unduly some three days,  
When, by the exhibition of some drug  
Or spell, exorcization, stroke of art  
Unknown to me and which 'twere well to know,  
The evil thing out-breaking all at once 85  
Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,—  
But, flinging, so to speak, life's gates too wide,



Making a clear house of it too suddenly,  
The first conceit that entered might inscribe  
Whatever it was minded on the wall 90  
So plainly at that vantage, as it were,  
(First come, first served) that nothing subsequent  
Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls  
The just-returned and new-established soul  
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart 95  
That henceforth she will read or these or none.  
And first—the man's own firm conviction rests  
That he was dead (in fact they buried him)  
—That he was dead and then restored to life  
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe: 100  
—'Sayeth, the same bade 'Rise,' and he did rise.  
'Such cases are diurnal,' thou wilt cry.  
Not so this figment!—not, that such a fume,  
Instead of giving way to time and health,  
Should eat itself into the life of life, 105  
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones and all!  
For see, how he takes up the after-life.  
The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,  
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,  
The body's habit wholly laudable, 110  
As much, indeed, beyond the common health  
As he were made and put aside to show.  
Think, could we penetrate by any drug  
And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,  
And bring it clear and fair, by three days' sleep! 115  
Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?  
This grown man eyes the world now like a child.  
Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,  
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,  
To bear my inquisition. While they spoke, 120

Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case,—  
He listened not except I spoke to him,  
But folded his two hands and let them talk,  
Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no fool.  
And that's a sample how his years must go. 125

Look if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,  
Should find a treasure, can he use the same  
With straitened habits and with tastes starved small,  
And take at once to his impoverished brain  
The sudden element that changes things, 130  
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand,  
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?  
Is he not such an one as moves to mirth—  
Warily parsimonious, when no need,  
Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times? 135

All prudent counsel as to what befits  
The golden mean, is lost on such an one:  
The man's fantastic will is the man's law.  
So here—we'll call the treasure knowledge, say,  
Increased beyond the fleshly faculty— 140  
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,  
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing Heaven.

The man is witless of the size, the sum,  
The value in proportion of all things,  
Or whether it be little or be much. 145

Discourse to him of prodigious armaments  
Assembled to besiege his city now,  
And of the passing of a mule with gourds—  
'Tis one! Then take it on the other side,  
Speak of some trifling fact—he will gaze rapt 150  
With stupor at its very littleness,  
(Far as I see)—as if in that indeed  
He caught prodigious import, whole results:

And so will turn to us the bystanders  
In ever the same stupor (note this point) 155  
That we too see not with his opened eyes.  
Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,  
Preposterously, at cross purposes.  
Should his child sicken unto death,—why, look  
For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness, 160  
Or pretermission of his daily craft—  
While a word, gesture, glance, from that same child  
At play or in the school or laid asleep,  
Will startle him to an agony of fear,  
Exasperation, just as like! demand 165  
The reason why—‘ ’tis but a word,’ object—  
‘A gesture’—he regards thee as our lord  
Who lived there in the pyramid alone,  
Looked at us, dost thou mind?—when being young  
We both would unadvisedly recite 170  
Some charm’s beginning, from that book of his,  
Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst  
All into stars, as suns grown old are wont,  
Thou and the child have each a veil alike  
Thrown o’er your heads, from under which ye both 175  
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match  
Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know!  
He holds on firmly to some thread of life—  
(It is the life to lead perforcedly)  
Which runs across some vast distracting orb 180  
Of glory on either side that meagre thread,  
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—  
The spiritual life around the earthly life!  
The law of that is known to him as this—  
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here. 185  
So is the man perplexed with impulses

Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,  
Proclaiming what is Right and Wrong across,  
And not along, this black thread through the blaze—  
‘It should be’ balked by ‘here it cannot be’ 190  
And oft the man’s soul springs into his face  
As if he saw again and heard again  
His sage that bade him ‘Rise’ and he did rise.  
Something, a word, a tick of the blood within  
Admonishes—then back he sinks at once 195  
To ashes, that was very fire before,  
In sedulous recurrence to his trade  
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;  
And studiously the humbler for that pride,  
Professedly the faultier that he knows 200  
God’s secret, while he holds the thread of life.  
Indeed the especial marking of the man  
Is prone submission to the Heavenly will—  
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.  
‘Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last 205  
For that same death which must restore his being  
To equilibrium, body loosening soul  
Divorced even now by premature full growth:  
He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live  
So long as God please, and just how God please. 210  
He even seeketh not to please God more  
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.  
Hence I perceive not he affects to preach  
The doctrine of his sect whate’er it be,  
Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do: 215  
How can he give his neighbour the real ground,  
His own conviction ? ardent as he is—  
Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old  
‘Be it as God please’ reassureth him.

I probed the sore as thy disciple should— 220  
 ‘How, beast,’ said I, ‘this stolid carelessness  
 Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march  
 To stamp out like a little spark thy town,  
 Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?’  
 He merely looked with his large eyes on me. 225  
 The man is apathetic, you deduce?  
 Contrariwise he loves both old and young,  
Able and weak—affects the very brutes  
 And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—  
 As a wise workman recognises tools 230  
 In a master’s workshop, loving what they make.  
 Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:  
 Only impatient, let him do his best,  
 At ignorance and carelessness and sin—  
 An indignation which is promptly curbed: 235  
 As when in certain travels I have feigned  
 To be an ignoramus in our art  
 According to some preconceived design,  
 And happed to hear the land’s practitioners  
 Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance, 240  
 Prattle fantastically on disease,  
 Its cause and cure—and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object—why have I not ere this  
 Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene  
 Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source, 245  
 Conferring with the frankness that befits?  
 Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech  
 Perished in a tumult many years ago,  
 Accused,—our learning’s fate,—of wizardry,  
 Rebellion, to the setting up a rule 250  
 And creed prodigious as described to me.

His death which happened when the earthquake fell  
(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss  
To occult learning in our lord the sage  
Who lived there in the pyramid alone) 255  
Was wrought by the mad people—that's their wont—  
On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,  
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—  
How could he stop the earthquake? That's their  
way!

The other imputations must be lies: 260  
But take one—though I loathe to give it thee,  
In mere respect to any good man's fame!  
(And after all, our patient Lazarus  
Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?  
Perhaps not: though in writing to a leech 265  
'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)  
This man so cured regards the curer then,  
As—God forgive me—who but God himself,  
Creator and Sustainer of the world,  
That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile! 270  
—'Sayeth that such an One was born and lived,  
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house.  
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,  
And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,  
And must have so avouched himself, in fact, 275  
In hearing of this very Lazarus  
Who saith—but why all this of what he saith?  
Why write of trivial matters, things of price  
Calling at every moment for remark?  
I noticed on the margin of a pool 280  
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,  
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,  
Which, now that I review it, needs must seem  
Unduly dwelt on, proluxly set forth! 285  
Nor I myself discern in what is writ  
Good cause for the peculiar interest  
And awe indeed this man has touched me with.  
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness  
Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus: 290  
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills  
Like an old lion's cheek-teeth. Out there came  
A moon made like a face with certain spots  
Multiform, manifold and menacing:  
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met 295  
In this old sleepy town at unaware,  
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.  
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked  
To this ambiguous Syrian—he may lose,  
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good. 300  
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends  
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine;  
Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell!

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think ?  
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too— 305  
So, through the thunder comes a human voice  
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!  
Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself.  
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of Mine,  
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love, 310  
And thou must love Me who have died for thee!'  
The madman saith He said so: it is strange.

## MEMORIAL VERSES

APRIL 1850

Goethe in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,  
 Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.  
 But one such death remain'd to come.  
 The last poetic voice is dumb.  
 What shall be said o'er Wordsworth's tomb ?

5

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,  
 We bow'd our head and held our breath.  
 He taught us little: but our soul  
 Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.  
 With shivering heart the strife we saw  
 Of Passion with Eternal Law;  
 And yet with reverential awe  
 We watch'd the fount of fiery life  
 Which serv'd for that Titanic strife.

10

When Goethe's death was told, we said—  
*Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.*  
*Physician of the Iron Age,*  
*Goethe has done his pilgrimage.*  
 He took the suffering human race,  
 He read each wound, each weakness clear—  
 And struck his finger on the place  
 And said—*Thou ailest here, and here—*  
 He look'd on Europe's dying hour  
 Of fitful dream and feverish power;  
 His eye plung'd down the weltering strife,

15

20

25



The turmoil of expiring life;  
He said—*The end is everywhere:*  
*Art still has truth, take refuge there.*  
And he was happy, (if to know  
Causes of things, and far below 30  
His feet to see the lurid flow  
Of terror, and insane distress,  
And headlong fate, be happiness.)

And Wordsworth!—Ah, pale Ghosts, rejoice!  
For never has such soothing voice 35  
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,  
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade  
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come  
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.  
Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye, 40  
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we.  
He too upon a wintry clime  
Had fallen—on this iron time  
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.  
—He found us when the age had bound 45  
Our souls in its benumbing round;  
He spoke, and loos'd our heart in tears.  
He laid us as we lay at birth  
On the cool flowery lap of earth;  
Smiles broke from us and we had ease. 50  
The hills were round us, and the breeze  
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again:  
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.  
Our youth return'd: for there was shed  
On spirits that had long been dead, 55  
Spirits dried up and closely-furl'd,  
The freshness of the early world.

Ah, since dark days still bring to light  
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,  
 Time may restore us in his course 60  
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force:  
 But where will Europe's latter hour  
 Again find Wordsworth'd healing power ?

Others will teach us how to dare,  
 And against fear our breast to steel: 65  
 Others will strengthen us to bear—  
 But who, ah who, will make us feel ?  
 The cloud of mortal destiny,  
 Others will front it fearlessly—  
 But who, like him, will put it by ? 70

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,  
 O Rotha! with thy living wave.  
 Sing him thy best! for few or none  
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

## JOHN MILTON

JOHN MILTON was born December 9, 1608 in Bread Street, London. His father, also John Milton, is said to have been disinherited by his family because he turned Puritan while a student at Oxford. He settled in London and prospered as a scrivener or notary public. He was a scholar and good business man, a strong Puritan both in religion and politics, but at the same time a musician, some of whose hymn tunes are still in use, and a lover of art and literature. The poet's mother was a woman of grace and refinement as well as of deeply religious and charitable nature. The household, then, was one that combined what was best in the culture of the Renaissance with the moral strength and piety of early Puritanism. The boy was taught music by his father and encouraged to read the classics for the enjoyment of their literature. He became so interested in his studies that, according to his own account, from the age of twelve onward he was seldom in bed before midnight.

After a brief course at the famous St. Paul's school he entered Christ's College, Cambridge in 1625 where he remained seven years. His father had intended him to go into the church but he found himself unable to take what he called the "oath of servitude" necessary for ordination and came home to live at Horton, a charming little village west of London, to which his father had now retired from business. During his years at Cambridge he had written several poems in Latin and nearly a dozen in English of which the best known are the famous *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* begun on Christmas Day, 1629, and in 1631 the sonnet, *On His being arrived at the Age of Twenty-three*. The extraordinary metrical skill of the *Hymn* and the power of its language were enough to convince all who had ears to hear that another great poet had arisen in England.

For six years Milton lived quietly at Horton reading widely in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish as well as English. He studied besides, mathematics, music, science,

and theology. If Milton is generally conceded to be our most learned poet, he certainly earned the right to the title by years of unremitting work. And yet he was no mere book-worm. At Cambridge a certain austerity and delicacy of life, as well as his great personal beauty, had brought him the nickname of "the lady of Christ's." But he was champion of the university in fencing, a sport that requires great skill and activity and that was practised by most students in those times when every gentleman wore a sword.

At Horton he wrote a group of poems that in themselves would give him place among the first of English poets: the companion pieces *Il Penseroso* and *L'Allegro* in 1632, *Arcades* (1633), *Comus* (1634), and *Lycidas* (1637). The influence of Spenser, of the classics, and of a new and graver temper than that of the early Renaissance marks them all in varying degrees.

- Spenser and the classics are dominant in the first three and the
- austerity of Puritanism in *Comus* and especially in *Lycidas*.

In 1638 Milton undertook the tour of the continent that was considered a necessary part of every young gentleman's education. He visited the great Dutch scholar, Grotius, in Paris and Galileo in Florence. He seems to have been received in Italian literary circles with quite unusual marks of distinction and favour. As he was about to set out for Greece word reached him of the final break between Charles I and the parliament. He at once returned to England to take part in the struggle "For I thought it base," he writes, "to be travelling at my ease for intellectual culture while my fellow countrymen at home were fighting for liberty."

For the next twenty years he was busy with controversy on matters of church and state. The best known of these prose works are the *Reformation of Church Discipline in England* (1641), *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), *The Tractate on Education* (1644), *Areopagitica* (1644), and the two defences, the *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1650) and the second *Defensio* (1654). In 1643 Milton, then a man of 35, had married Mary Powell, a girl of 17, the daughter of an Oxfordshire cavalier. Apparently the vivacious girl found Milton's severe habit of study and the austere atmosphere of his home depressing. She went to her own home on a visit and declined to return. Milton

promptly wrote his tract on divorce which raised a storm and scandalized the community as he argued with characteristic boldness and freedom that incompatibility of temperament or, to use his own words, "unfitness and contrariety of mind" was an adequate ground for divorce. A reconciliation was effected in 1645 and the two lived together till her death in 1652. There were three daughters from the union. The *Areopagitica*, the only one of Milton's prose works that is at all well-known today is the noblest plea in the language for liberty of speech and the freedom of the press.

It is difficult for us to realize the shock that the execution of Charles gave to seventeenth century Europe. The government of the new Commonwealth was regarded very much in the same light as the Bolsheviks of Russia are today by the rest of the world. They had laid violent hands on the Lord's anointed when they executed their king. Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, which appeared two weeks after the execution, argued the divine right of a people to govern themselves and to pass judgment on an unjust ruler. The new government made Milton Secretary for Foreign Tongues, a post he held till the Restoration. It brought him £288 a year, an amount equivalent to at least £1000 today. His two great tracts in defence of the English people gave him a European reputation as it was generally held that in both logic and learning he had got the better of Salmasius, the great French scholar of Leyden, who had argued the Royalist case. He paid dear for his triumph, as the labour of preparation was too much for his sight that had long been failing and he went quite blind.

At the Restoration he of course lost his office and had to go into hiding. His name, however, was included in the amnesty that followed. In the meantime Milton had married again in 1656 but his wife, Katharine Woodcock, the "late espoused saint" of his touching sonnet in her memory, died in childbirth the following year. In 1663, now totally blind and almost helpless, he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, a woman of 25 who seems to have managed his household well and to have brought him, if not happiness, at least domestic peace. This is the period in which he turned again to his youthful

dream of writing a great poem that his countrymen "should not willingly let die."

As all the world knows this was the *Paradise Lost*, begun in 1658, finished in 1664, and finally published in 1667. This magnificent poem disputes with Dante's *Divina Commedia* the right to be called the greatest modern epic. Milton's reward for writing it was, in Carlyle's grim comment, "£5 and a rather close escape from death on the gallows." In sober fact he got £15 and his widow sold her rights to the publisher for £8 more. Even that sum, it must be admitted, is a pitiful return for writing the poem which, after the plays of Shakespeare, is the chief glory of English literature. The *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were published in 1671. The latter is a tragedy in the Greek manner written on a Bible subject, that of Samson blind and captive among the Philistines. In part at least the pathos and dignity of this great tragedy depend on the fact that it typifies his own life. He had been a mighty champion for England as Samson had for Israel. Like the strong man of old he was now blind and captive, fallen on evil days among the "sons of Belial" who had swept away all he had fought to make prevail. The reader who knows no Greek but would like to know what Greek tragedy is like cannot do better than read *Samson Agonistes*. Moreover he will be rewarded by finding in some of the choruses as subtle and melodious and freely-changing rhythms as anything Milton ever wrote.

One notes in recent criticism of Milton an increasing tendency to rate his minor poems higher and the great epic and even the tragedy lower than used to be the prevailing judgment. The reason is fairly obvious. The time spirit fights against *Paradise Lost*. That great poem requires of its readers knowledge that relatively few now possess: an understanding of Calvinist theology, an intimate knowledge of the Bible, especially of the old Testament, and familiarity with the mythology of Greece and Rome. Without this equipment a reader cannot get the full flavour of Milton. And yet anyone who loves poetry must feel the charm and power of the stately music and the sense "variously drawn out from one verse into another" with something of the effect produced by pulling out a new stop in a pipe organ, the instrument on which Milton loved to play. Even

the shorter poems may tax one's knowledge of classical mythology and the old Testament but their clear outlines, rythmical movement, and romantic atmosphere are likely to keep them long in favour with those who really love poetry.

Further, the character of Milton underlies and supports and strengthens the appeal of all that he wrote. Chaucer made it the chief merit of his poor parson that:

"Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve

He taughte, but first he folwed it hym-selve."

And so Milton who had written as a young man, "He that would hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and most honourable things," might look back on his strenuous life with the proud assurance that he had lived up to his early ideal. He was not merely a great poet, he was in all essentials a very great and noble man.

#### BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

The following books of reference are standard ones for the study of Milton's poetry:

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*Milton's Prosody* by Robert Bridges, Oxford University Press.

#### L'ALLEGRO

The companion poems *L'Allegro* (the joyous or cheerful man) and *Il Penseroso* (the pensive or meditative man) were written at Horton, a little village west of London in a beautiful country



of meadows, woods, and streams, where Milton's father had retired to spend his last years. The scenery of the district is reflected in the descriptions that still charm the reader of the poems. The Italian titles express better than 'Mirth' and 'Melancholy' the exact ideas Milton meant to convey. His *L'Allegro* is precisely the man of a quick spirit as the word implies, and there is nothing of the ill-humour that Melancholy suggests in his *Il Penseroso*.

7 The two poems are almost exactly balanced in structure so that a very brief analysis of *L'Allegro* will suggest the outline of *Il Penseroso* also. It opens with a 10-line introduction dismissing the opposite mood. Lines 11-40 welcome Mirth, state her origin, and exhort her to come with her train of followers and admit the poet to make one of them and enjoy the delights she can give. Lines 41-150 recount the pleasures of a typical day with Mirth. It is easy to divide this section into Morning (41-68), bright Day-time (66-99), Evening (100-116), and Night (135-150). The poem closes with a couplet formally accepting Mirth.

1 The alternate short and long lines of the ten line introduction  
2 change to the eight-syllabled iambic couplet for the body of  
3 the poem. The omission of the unaccented first syllable in a  
4 } great many of the lines gives the rapid movement of a trochaic  
metre to more than a third of *L'Allegro*. Comparatively few  
lines of *Il Penseroso* omit the first syllable with the result that  
it has a slower movement and more sober effect. *Sanctus*

All the charm of Spenser, Milton's favourite poet, is in the language and the rich allusiveness of these poems. And yet their structure, their organization is as clear and firm as the best models in ancient art. Indeed they are almost unique in English poetry in their curious combination of romantic spirit and classical form.

## NOTES

1-2. *Melancholy*. Milton is here enlarging on an old classical myth to suit his own person. Night was wedded to her brother Erebus and had the Sky and Day as children of the union. She was also spoken of, however, as the mother of Death and Sleep and Fate and Care. Here Milton just adds one more



child to that terrible family. He emphasizes his adjective 'loathed' by making Cerberus the three-headed dog that guarded the gates of Pluto's realm, her father.

3. *Stygian cave*. Cave on the banks of the river Styx that borders Hades. Milton is no doubt thinking of Virgil's description of Cerberus' own cave that faced the spot where the spirits were landed by old Charon who ferried them across the Styx.

See Virgil's *Aeneid*, VI, 417-424.

4. *Horrid*. Milton was fond of this word using it no less than four times in Book I of *Paradise Lost*. When he wrote, it had all the force that we still feel in the word 'horrible.'

5. *Uncouth*. Horrible and unknown. The original sense is 'unknown', but the secondary idea of something terrible or loathsome in what is unknown is here probably the stronger of the two senses, both of which are present.

6. *Jealous*. The metaphor in this seems to be that of comparing darkness to a great bird. The eighteenth century editor Warburton explains 'jealous' as an allusion "to the watch which fowls keep when they are sitting."

7. *Night-Raven*. The raven has always been considered a bird of ill omen. It is not a nocturnal bird, the adjective 'night' in all probability being used because of its colour. Commentators cite several instances however of the compound word 'night-raven', the best-known being Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, iii, 84. Compare, too, Poe's well-known poem, *The Raven*.

8. *Ebon*. Dark as ebony.

9. *Ragged*. *Rugged*. See *Isaiah* II, 21: "To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of ragged rocks."

10. *Cimmerian desert*. That is, a desert darkened with perpetual clouds. At the limits of the world by the Ocean stream "is the land and the city of the Cimmerians, shrouded in mist and cloud, and never does the shining sun look down on them with his rays, neither when he climbs up the starry heavens, nor when again he turns earthward from the firmament, but deadly night is outspread over miserable mortals" *Odyssey* XI, 14-19. (Butcher and Lang's translation).

11. Note the change in metre beginning with this line.

12. *Yclept*. Called. A middle English form of the past

participle of the old English verb *clīpan*, to call. It was archaic or merely poetical even in Milton's day though poets have used it since.

*Euphrosyne*. One of the three Graces; the word means 'cheerfulness' or 'the cheerful one.'

14-16. The usual myth is that the graces were daughters of Zeus and Eurynome, daughter of Oceanus, though various goddesses were named as their mother. The story of their parentage by Venus, the goddess of love, and Bacchus, the god of wine is very unusual.

14. *At a birth*. At one birth.

17. *As some sager sing*. Milton obviously implies that he prefers this account. So far as is known he is the only one to give this genealogy.

18. *The frolic wind*. That is Zephyr, the southwest wind. 'Frolic' is used for our adjective 'frolicsome.'

19. *Aurora*. The dawn. Notice Milton's allegory, that Cheerfulness is begotten of the fresh air and early morning.

20. *A-Maying*. Taking part in the sports of May-day. The 'a' is a weakened form of an older 'on'. Compare *aground*, *afoot*, *afloat*, etc.

22. *Fresh-blown*. Newly opened or blossomed.

24. *Buxom, blithe, and debonair*. These adjectives are probably grouped as much for the alliteration as for anything else. 'Buxom' originally meaning pliant or obedient came to mean attractive, especially in the sense of being lively and vigorous. 'Blithe' means cheerful, light-hearted. 'Debonair' seems to be used in its original sense of 'having pleasant manners.'

25. *Nymph*. Maiden; in classical mythology all the minor goddesses that lived in the mountains, streams, or woods were called nymphs.

27. *Quips and cranks*. Sharp sayings and odd turns of speech.

*Wanton wiles*. Sportive tricks. Wile is by derivation the same word as guile.

28. *Becks*. Beckonings.

*Wreathed smiles*. Smiles that curve the features.

29. Hebe was the daughter of Zeus and Hera, goddess of youth, and cup-bearer to the gods.

33-68. Notice the length of this loose and swiftly moving sentence.

33. *Trip it.* Step with short, springy steps. The 'it' is really equal to 'a tripping', that is, it is a cognate object.

34. This famous phrase has passed into a synonym for dancing. It seems to refer, however, to a light skipping motion in which the steps go wherever the fancy or fantasy of the nymph may please.

36. *Mountain nymph.* There are many allusions in poetry to mountains being the home of liberty. Compare Wordsworth's sonnet, "Two Voices are There."

38. *Crew.* Company.

39. *Her.* Liberty.

40. *Unreproved pleasures free.* Free pleasures that need no reproof.

43. *His.* That is, the lark's, who sings on the wing high up in the air from where he catches the first beams of the sun.

44. *Dappled dawn.* That is, with the morning sky flecked with gray clouds. Compare our description of a horse's colour as 'dappled gray.'

45. *Then to come.* It is, of course, Milton, or L'Allegro, who comes to the window when roused by the lark's song and looks out on the cheerful dawn bidding good morning to the world at large. 'To come' is parallel with 'to live' (39), and 'to hear' (41), and like them depends on 'admit me' (38).

*In spite of sorrow.* That is, in despite or defiance of sorrow.

47. *Sweet-briar.* The prickly wild-rose with single pink flowers.

*Vine.* Probably ivy.

48. *Eglantine.* Ordinarily this is only another name for the sweet-briar, but the adjective 'twisted' has made several commentators take it to mean honey-suckle.

52. *Oft listening.* He describes here another of the innocent pleasures to which he has begged mirth to admit him. Notice that the 'oft' makes it clear that he is not describing the pleasures of one morning only but typical morning pleasures. Some mornings on waking he hears the hounds and the huntsman's horn.

54. *Cheerly*. Cheerily or cheerfully,

54-56. *Rouse the slumbering morn*. The metaphor is clear enough. The merry din of the hunt awakens the morn, pictured as still asleep in the shadow of the gray hill-side, and goes echoing through the woods on the hill-top.

55. *Hoar*. Probably gray, either from being in the shadow or with morning mist. Several commentators take it to mean white with hoar-frost.

57. *Sometime walking*. This quite clearly refers to a different morning and again describes one of the pleasures mirth can give.

*Not unseen*. Compare *Il Penseroso*, line 65 "I walk unseen." That is, the cheerful man does not, like the pensive one, shun the sight or company of his fellows. Milton seems to imply that all the country folk enumerated in lines 63-67 will be glad at seeing him up early to enjoy the sunrise.

59. *The eastern gate*. A not uncommon phrase in the poetry of the time. Due east, the exact place where the sun rises.

60. *His state*. "His stately progress" (Keightley).

61. *Amber*. Amber-coloured, pale yellow.

62. *Liveries*. Dress, uniforms. It is the sun who gives these many-coloured robes to the clouds and so they may be described as servants' liveries.

*Dight*. Arrayed; a word now obsolete.

67. *Tells his tale*. Counts his flock.

69. *Straight mine eye*. These words begin a new paragraph in his description. Note that what he describes now is evidently seen later in the day than just at sunrise.

70. *Landskip*. Landscape.

71. *Russet Lawns*. Milton regularly uses 'lawn' to mean an open grassy space. The adjective implies the brown of autumn.

71. *Fallows*. Lands, allowed to lie idle during the growing season. Here, as there is evidently grass on it, it probably means lands that had not been ploughed for years.

75. *Pied*. Part-coloured, variegated with blotches of two or more colours. Milton was almost certainly thinking of Shakespeare's song, "When daisies pied and violets blue," *Love's Labour Lost*, V, ii, 897.

76-78. It is thought that these lines describe scenes in the

neighbourhood of Horton, Milton's home. The 'towers and battlements' may be those of Windsor Castle.

79. *Lies*. Dwells.

80. *Cynosure*. Phœnician sailors steered by the constellation Cynosura or Lesser Bear which contains the North star. The word, therefore, came to mean 'a centre of attraction or attention.'

83. *Corydon and Thyrsis*. These are common names in pastoral poetry as are also Phillis (86) and to a lesser degree Thestylis (88). See for example Virgil, *Eclogue VII* where Corydon and Thyrsis compete in song.

85. *Messes*. Dishes, portions of food.

86. *Dresses*. Prepares.

91. *Sometimes*. The scene changes to that of an afternoon's holiday with the folk of the upland hamlets.

*Secure*. Carefree.

94. *Rebecks*. Stringed instruments played with a bow. The rebec is an early type of fiddle or violin with two or three strings.

96. *Chequered shade*. Milton probably had in mind Shakespeare's passage first cited by Richardson:

"The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind  
And make a chequered shadow on the lawn."

*Titus Andronicus*, II, iii, 14-15.

100. *Spicy nut-brown ale*. A drink of hot ale sweetened and spiced with nutmeg and with roasted crab apples in it.

101. *Feat*. Exploit.

102. *Faery Mab*. See Shakespeare *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 53-69 Mab is the fairy who sends dreams and who helps or hinders the work of dairy-maids especially their churning.

*Junkets*. Dainties. Originally it meant cream-cheese.

*Eat*. Past tense, equivalent to ate.

103. *She*. One of the speakers. Lazy maids were likely to be pinched by the fairies while they slept.

104. *He*. Another speaker.

*Friar's lanthorn*. The Will O' the Wisp or flickering light sometimes seen above marshy ground.

105. *Tells*. The man who had been led astray by the Friar's lanthorn evidently feels qualified to tell about other supernatural beings.

*The drudging goblin.* He was popularly known as Robin Goodfellow, a lazy but good-natured giant who could sometimes be bribed by a bowlful of cream into doing a lot of work for the farm labourers. Shakespeare's Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is this old spirit somewhat idealized.

105. *Sweat.* Past tense.

*Lies him down.* This is not a mistake for lays him down. The 'him' is an instance of an old dative, the so-called ethic dative. Compare 'sits him down.'

110. *Lubber.* Clumsy, loutish.

112. *His hairy strength.* The association of a thick growth of hair on the body or head with great strength is very old and still persists.

114. *Matin.* Morning song or call.

115. *Thus done the tales.* An absolute construction.

117. *Then.* At that time of day. At the time when the rustics are asleep the cheerful youth in the city is just beginning his evening's enjoyment. And so Milton, calling up in succession all the pleasures likely to appeal to L'Allegro in a whole day, turns his thought from country to city. He, of course, does not mean that the youth on any one particular day spends his evening in a rustic hamlet and then hurries in to the theatre at night.

120. *Weeds.* Garments; the word survives in 'widows' weeds'

*High triumphs.* Great public entertainments such as jousts, masques, processions, and pageants of which the age was so fond.

121. *Store of ladies.* Many ladies.

122. *Rain influence.* Influence at this time was still a technical term of astrology meaning the effect of the stars on human affairs. By a metaphor Milton speaks of the ladies' eyes showering influence on men as did the stars. Compare Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*, 69-71:

"The stars, with deep amaze,  
Stand fixt in stedfast gaze,  
Bending one way their precious influence."

122. *Judge the prize.* Award the prize. Grammatically the construction is "whose bright eyes . . . judge the prize." The sense construction is probably best taken as "Whose bright eyes rain influence, and (who) judge the prize."

123. *Of wit or arms.* Wit is here used in the sense of ingenuity, skill, and applies to the imagination and taste used by the one who devised the masque or pageant, as arms, of course, applies to the skill and strength of a combatant in a tourney.

*Both.* Probably wit and arms though it may possibly refer to two contestants.

124. *Her grace whom.* A Latinism, the favour of her whom.

125. *Hymen.* The god of marriage. Hymen would naturally be a figure in the masques and pageants usually presented in the seventeenth century at the wedding festivities of great personages.

126. *In saffron robe.* This is the regular garb of Hymen who is represented in art as a beautiful youth bearing a torch.

127. *Pomp.* A formal procession, the original meaning of the word.

128. *Antique pageantry.* A pageant of olden times.

131. *Then.* This marks a later stage in the day's enjoyment, or, perhaps, enjoyment on a different day.

132. *Jonson's learned sock.* Ben Jonson (1574-1637) was the greatest of the dramatists contemporary with Shakespeare. He wrote in accordance with the 'rules' based on classical drama. The adjective 'learned' is an allusion to his knowledge of the classics. The sock was the low-heeled shoe worn by actors of comedy on the ancient Greek and Roman stage. The actor of tragedy wore the buskin or cothurnus.

133-4. This contrast of Shakespeare's naturalness and lack of education with the learned Jonson was common in Milton's time.

135. *Against eating cares.* To prevent gnawing anxiety. The 'eating cares' is just a translation of Horace's phrase, "mordaces sollicitudines" *Odes* I, 18, line 4.

136. *Lap.* Wrap.

*Lydian airs.* Soft, languishing music.

137. Joined with great poetry.

138. *Soul.* Object of 'pierce.'

139. *Bout.* Bend or turning.

142. *Mazes.* Puzzling or difficult passages in the music.

143-4. That is, allowing perfect harmony to be set free in the sound of the music.



145. *That.* So that.

146. *Orpheus.* In Greek mythology Orpheus was the son of Apollo or of a Thracian river-god and was husband of Eurydice. He played so entrancingly on the lyre that he had power to charm all things and creatures. He descended alive into Hades to plead that Eurydice be given back to him from the dead. Pluto was so moved by his playing that he granted the request on condition that Orpheus should walk ahead of Eurydice and not look back at her till they both reached the world above. Just as he passed the boundary of Pluto's realm Orpheus turned his head and Eurydice faded back into the world of shades.

145. *Heave his head.* Raise his head; compare *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 211.

147. *Elysian flowers.* Elysium was the abode of the blest, usually pictured as a flowery meadow.

149. *Pluto.* The god of the world below, brother of Zeus and Poseidon, or Jupiter and Neptune, to use the Roman names.

*Quite.* Completely.

151-2. Compare the closing lines of Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*:

"If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my love."

## IL PENSEROSO

The plan of *Il Penseroso* is almost exactly that of *L'Allegro*. It begins with the dismissal of Mirth and her train, welcomes Melancholy in a speech that recounts her origin and attractions, describes the pleasures of a typical night in her company, and closes with a couplet formally accepting Melancholy. One difference is significant. After he has described a typical day, Milton adds in lines 167-174 a wish that he may spend his age in solitude and contemplation. It is one of the bits of evidence that go to show his real preference for the Melancholy rather than the Mirthful spirit. It is worth noting too, that throughout the poem his *L'Allegro* is more an observer than a whole-hearted partaker in the social joys he describes. *Il Penseroso*, on the other hand, has a share himself in all the pleasures Melancholy gives.

Dr. Manly of the University of Chicago has pointed out the



similarity between *Il Penseroso* and John Fletcher's *Sweetest Melancholy*, which can be readily compared, as it may be found in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, number cxxxii. Note that there are striking resemblances in phraseology and that lines 8-17 of Fletcher's poem are in the same metre as the body of *Il Penseroso*. There is, however, an air of sincerity in Milton that shows the poem to be a genuine expression of his thought and temperament. Fletcher gives the impression of one who is cultivating a fashionable fad, and it is well known that an admiration for melancholy was in fashion with the young men of his day.

3. *Bested*. Help, advantage. (= bestead)

4. *Toys*. Trifles.

6. *Fond*. Foolish.

10. *Pensioners*. Retinue, followers.

*Of*. That compose.

*Morpheus*'. In the Roman poets he is the god of dreams. the son of Sleep.

14. *To hit the sense of*. To be perceived by.

18. *Prince Memnon's sister*. Homer speaks of Memnon as "the comeliest man" in the Trojan forces, indeed as the comeliest man Ulysses ever saw: *Odyssey* xi, 522. He was an Ethiopian and of course dark-skinned.

18. *Beseem*. Become.

19. *That starred Ethiop queen*. Cassiopeia, wife of Cepheus and mother of Andromeda. Poseidon, god of the sea, sent a great sea-monster to ravage the land because of her boast that she was more beautiful than the sea-nymphs. She exposed Andromeda to be devoured by the monster but the maiden was rescued by her lover, Perseus. After her death Cassiopeia was raised to the heavens as the constellation that bears her name.

23. *Vesta*. The goddess of the hearth. She was the goddess of the sacred fire guarded by the Vestal virgins.

24. *Saturn*. The ancient god who taught the beginnings of civilization to the people and who was later overthrown by his son Jove or Jupiter.

26. *Stain*. Disgrace.

29. *Ida's*. Ida was a mountain range forming the southern boundary of the plain of Troy. It is celebrated in Greek mythology as a haunt of the gods.

31. *Pensive Nun*. Note the guise in which Milton imagines the spirit of melancholy to come. The adjective implies a sober but not unpleasant state of mind.

33. *Grain*. Color, perhaps purple, which was the colour originally meant by 'grain.'

35. *Sable stole of cypress lawn*. Black robe or scarf of fine linen crape.

36. *Decent*. Comely, shapely.

37. *Wonted state*. Accustomed stately behavior.

39. *Commercing*. Note that the accent is on the second syllable.

43. *Leaden*. Professor Masson thinks this is a reference to the leaden colour of the eye-sockets which was thought to indicate a melancholy disposition.

52. *Yon*. Yonder.

54. *The Cherub Contemplation*. The fiery-wheeled throne is a reference to *Ezekiel* x. Milton names one of the four Cherubim that were at the four wheels, Contemplation. By this term he seems to mean the kind of rapt mystic thought that we associate with the holy man of the East.

55. *Hist*. The imperative of the verb meaning 'urge', 'incite.'

56. '*Less*'. Unless.

*Philomel*. The nightingale.

59. *Cynthia*. Diana the moon goddess; here she is pictured driving a team of dragons.

60. *Accustomed*. This is not clear; perhaps it means the oak from Milton's point of view, one above which he often saw the moon rise.

71-72. Note the accuracy and beauty of this description.

73. *Oft*. Note that, as in the *L'Allegro*, Milton is not restricting himself to a single place or time but selecting times and places that are pleasing to the contemplative man.

76. Notice this fine description of the sound of a big bell heard at a distance.

77. *Air*. Weather.

83. *Bellman's*. Keightley quotes from Stowe: 'The bellman at every lane's end, and at the ward's end, gave warning of fire and candle, and to help the poor, and to pray for the dead.'

87. *Outwatch the Bear*. The constellation of the Great

Bear or the Dipper never sets. He would have to watch till dawn.

88. *Thrice great Hermes*. The Hermes Trismegistus of the Greeks. He was a fabled king of the Egyptians who was supposed to have written a great many books on science, politics, and religion. Some forty or more encyclopedic works on Egypt reputed to be his are extant.

*Unsphere*. Bring back from the sphere where it now is.

89. *Plato*. The great Greek philosopher of the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.

90-92. This is a reference to Plato's teaching of the immortality of the soul especially in the *Phaedo*.

93-94. The doctrine of the ~~demons~~ or spirits of the four elements is later than Plato. It was taught by his followers, the Neo-Platonists.

93. *Of those demons*. The phrase depends on 'unfold' (89), in the sense of 'tell.'

95. *Consent*. Agreement, connection.

98. *With sceptred pall*. That is, with sceptre and pall: these were marks of kingship, and Greek tragedy, of which Milton is thinking, was almost confined to the fate of royal persons. 'Pall' is a long cloak or mantle.

99-100. These were the usual subjects of Greek tragedy. Thebes was the capital of Boeotia. The war of the Seven against Thebes and the fate of Oedipus and his daughter Antigone were favourite subjects. The great trilogy by Aeschylus dealt with the fortunes of Agamemnon, a descendant of Pelops. Many tragedies were based on the story of the Trojan War.

101-102. Almost certainly intended for Shakespeare's plays.

102. *Buskined*. The buskin was a boot that came up to the calf of the leg. It was identified with the cothurnus, the high boot worn by ancient actors of tragedy.

103. *Sad Virgin*. The 'pensive Nun' of line 31, that is, Melancholy.

104. *Musaeus*. A legendary Greek poet of Attica to whom were attributed poems associated with the worship of Demeter at Eleusis.

105. *Orpheus*. See note on *L'Allegro*, 146.

109. *Him*. Chaucer, whose Squire's Tale in the *Canterbury*

*Tales* is unfinished. This story of the Tartar king Cambuscan is partly summarized in lines 111-115.

111. These were the sons of Cambuscan.

112. *Canace*. The daughter of Cambuscan.

113. *Virtuous*. Having virtue or power.

116-120. These lines refer to Spenser, in whose *Faerie Queen* are all the details mentioned.

120. *More is meant*. That is, it has an allegorical meaning.

123. *Tricked and frounced*. Dressed or adorned, and curled.

124. *The Attic boy*. Cephalus, the grandson of King Cecrops, with whom Eos, the dawn, was in love.

127. *Still*. Gentle.

134. *Sylvan*. Sylvanus, the god of the woods.

135. *Monumental*. Probably in the sense of old, recalling the past. Keightley thinks it a reference to the use of oak for carved monuments in churches.

145. *Consort*. Harmony, symphony.

148. *Wave at his wings*. Move to and fro gently beside Sleep's wings. One commentator very aptly cites Spenser's *Faerie Queen* I, i, 44,

'And on his little winges the dreame he bore.'

156. *Cloister's pale*. A cloister is a covered passage on the side of a court, usually with one side walled and the other an open colonnade. 'Pale' means 'enclosure'. In such cloisters at colleges students walked up and down reading.

157. *Embowed*. Arched.

159. *Dight*. Adorned. The reference is to stained glass windows. All the details given in lines 156-160 are descriptive of Gothic architecture; the high arched roof, the strong massive pillars, the rich stained glass windows. Line 160 is one of the finest descriptive phrases in the language.

162. *Quire*. Choir, an older spelling.

164. *As may*. We should have to say 'such as may.'

169. *Hairy*. To wear a hair shirt next the skin was one form of penance or self-torture.

170. *Spell*. Interpret the meaning.

## COMUS

*Comus* was written at the request of the musician Henry Lawes, a friend of Milton's, who wrote the music for it and acted the part of the Attendant Spirit when it was presented at Ludlow Castle before the Earl of Bridgewater in the autumn of 1634. It is based on the story that the two sons and the daughter of this Earl were benighted in Haywood Forest when returning from a visit in Herefordshire and that the Lady Alice was lost for a short time. It gained in vividness by the fact that it was acted by the very children who had been lost.

*Comus* is much the best-known specimen in English of that curious hybrid form of drama called the masque, which reached its period of greatest development at the court of James I. Many notable men collaborated in their production. Shirley and Ben Jonson wrote numerous masques, musicians like Thomas Campion and Henry Lawes composed the music for the songs, and the architect, Inigo Jones, devised the scenery and stage-settings for their gorgeous presentations at court.

The masque began in Italy as a prelude, often dramatic in form, to the masked balls so fashionable in the Renaissance period. The reader may recall how in *Romeo and Juliet* (Act I, Sc. iv.) the young men going to the masked ball at the Capulets debate the advisability of speaking some prologue when they enter. These dramatic preludes were developed at the court of James till they became the important part of the entertainment and the dance was a mere appendage. They appealed to all the senses through their combination of spectacle, dancing, music, and dramatic action. The masque has a real importance in the history of music and drama, not merely for its own sake, but because it served as a preparation for opera.

By common consent Milton's *Comus* is not only the best-known but the best masque in the language. In addition to all the charms which it shares with other masques, it has as its main charm the rich and serious poetry that Milton puts into the mouths of the characters in his simple little story. Moreover he was so great an artist that he could make the slender form of the masque carry the weight of his moral teaching, that virtue and innocence cannot be permanently harmed by any assaults from without. The eternal triumph of good over

evil is the real theme of *Comus* as triumphantly proclaimed in the closing speech of the Attendant Spirit:

Mortals that would follow me,  
Love Virtue; she alone is free.  
She can teach ye how to climb  
Higher than the sphery clime;  
Or, if Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

Notice the stage direction, 'The first scene discovers (that is, reveals) a wild wood.' It is clear that there must have been rather elaborate scenery. Note, too, that the Spirit descends or enters. It would require some sort of mechanical contrivance to have him lowered to the stage.

3. *Inspired*. Compare *Il Penseroso*, line 88 and the note on it.

6. *Pestered*. Harassed with petty vexations.

*Pinfold*. A pound or enclosure for animals.

10. *Mortal change*. Change caused by death; compare *Paradise Lost*, line 3: 'Whose mortal taste.' The word here seems to have a passive sense.

11. Notice this language of classic mythology used to describe Christian theology.

13. *Golden key*. See *Lycidas*, 111.

16. *Ambrosial weeds*. Immortal garments, celestial robes.

20. In explanation of this passage Masson cites *Iliad* xv., 190-197: "For three brethren are we, and sons of Kronos, whom Rhea bare, Zeus, and myself, and Hades is the third, the ruler of the folk in the underworld. And in three lots are all things divided, and each drew a domain of his own, and to me fell the hoary sea, to be my habitation for ever, when we shook the lots: and Hades drew the murky darkness, and Zeus the wide heaven, in clear air and clouds, but the earth and high Olympus are yet common to all."

25. *By course*. In turn.

27. *Tridents*. The three-tined spear that is the symbol of Neptune's power.

29. *Quarters*. Divides.

*Blue-haired deities*. It is not clear what Milton is thinking of. The followers of Neptune were pictured as green-haired. He may have had in mind merely the blue of sea-water

or possibly he may refer to the tradition of the ancient Britons dyeing their skins a blue colour with the woad.

31. *A noble peer.* The Earl of Bridgewater at that time Viceroy of Wales.

33. *Nation.* The Welsh.

37. *Perplexed.* Entangled.

46-50. This is an old legend of Bacchus, the god of wine. He turned the pirates who seized him into dolphins. The story of his going to Circe's isle is an invention of Milton's. Notice that according to Milton's poems Comus and Mirth are half brothers. See *L'Allegro*, lines 14-16.

48. Notice this Latin construction. We should have to say 'after the transformation of the Tuscan mariners.'

49. *Tyrrhene.* That is, the west coast of Italy.

50. *Circe.* She was an enchantress, daughter of the Sun and the sea-nymph, Perse.

51-53. This is the Homeric story told in the tenth book of the *Odyssey*.

58. *Comus.* The god of mirth in late Greek mythology. It is pronounced with the 'o' long as in 'comb.'

60. That is, the fields of Gaul and Spain.

66. *Drouth of Phoebus.* Thirst caused by the sun.

71. *Ounce.* The leopard-like wildcat of Tibet and southern Siberia.

72. *As they were.* Notice that it is only the head that is changed by Comus' magic. This fact makes the masque easier to act. Note, too, that their spirits are debased. Circe changed only the form.

79. *Adventurous.* That supplies adventures.

83. *Iris.* The goddess of the rainbow.

89. *Office.* Duty.

93. That is, the evening star.

95-100. All these expressions indicate that it is midnight

112. *Quire.* Choir.

116. *Morrice.* Originally a Moorish dance.

129. *Cotytto.* A Thracian goddess worshipped with riotous rites.

132. *Stygian.* Belonging to the Styx, the river that surrounded Hades.

*Spets.* A variant form of 'spits.'



135. *Hecate*. A goddess of the infernal regions who taught witchcraft.

139. *Nice*. Dainty.

144. Compare *L'Allegro*, 34.

153-154. At this point in the masque the actor of Comus throws some powder into the air and it ignites with a blue flame.

155. *Blair*. Dim, indistinct.

160-167. The purpose of this speech is, of course, to give the audience information. Compare the opening speech of the Attendant Spirit. This use of soliloquy to give information is now no longer used by dramatists.

167. *Gear*. Property.

175. *Granges*. Granaries.

176. *Pan*. The god of the pastures, forests, and flocks.

178. *Swilled insolence*. Drunken insults.

181. *Blind*. Compare *The Passing of Arthur*, 76.

189. *Votarist in palmer's weeds*. A person under vows of religion and wearing pilgrim's clothes.

204. *Single darkness*. Darkness alone.

215. Note that Chastity takes the place here of the usual Charity accompanying Faith and Hope.

230. Notice the introduction of a song which certainly is not a dramatic probability.

*Echo*. A nymph who pined away until only her voice was left because of her unrequited love for Narcissus, a beautiful youth who was punished by the gods for his hardness of heart. He fell in love with his own shadow reflected in a pool and was turned into a flower that bears his name.

232. *Meander*. A river of western Asia Minor flowing into the Aegean Sea; its windings were so numerous that they passed into a proverb.

241. *Of the Sphere*. This seems to mean that Echo is born of the Air in the hollow beneath the heavens.

253. *Sirens*. Sea-nymphs who fascinated sailors passing their island and destroyed them.

254. *Naiades*. Spirits of the springs and streams.

257. *Scylla*. A sea-monster who lived in the rock Scylla opposite Charybdis in the Straits of Messina.

259. *Charybdis*. A sea-monster which three times a day sucked in the sea and threw it up again in a terrible whirlpool.



267. *Unless the goddess.* Unless thou be the goddess.
268. *Sylvan.* Sylvanus was god of the woods.
271. *Ill is lost.* A Latinism; is lost to no purpose.
273. *Extreme shift.* Desperate expedient or attempt.
277. The 14 lines beginning here recall those scenes in Greek tragedy where the dialogue is in alternate single lines.
290. Hebe was the goddess of youth and spring and cup-bearer to the gods.
293. *Swinked.* Tired with work.
297. *Port.* Bearing
299. *The element.* The air or sky.
301. *Plighted.* Pleated, folded.
301. *Strook.* Struck.
313. *Bosky.* Bushy.
315. *Attendance.* Put for attendants.
329. *Square.* Adapt.
- 341-342. Calisto, daughter of the Arcadian king, Lycaon, was changed into the constellation of the Greater Bear; her son was put beside her as the Lesser Bear or Cynosure. Tyrian sailors steered by the North Star which is in the Lesser Bear.
344. *Wattled cotes.* Enclosures fenced with interwoven branches.
345. *Stops.* Holes in a flute or pipe.
349. *Innumeros.* Innumerable.
359. *Exquisite.* Inquisitive.
360. *Cast.* Forecast, predict.
366. *To seek.* At a loss.
367. *Unprincipled.* Ignorant of the principles.
369. *Single.* Mere.
376. *Seeks to.* Has recourse to.
380. *To-ruffled.* Be-ruffled.
382. *I' the centre.* That is, of the earth.
393. *Hesperian.* A reference to the apples of the Hesperides which Ge, the Earth, gave to Hera when she wedded Zeus. They were guarded by a dragon.
395. *Unenchanted.* That cannot be enchanted.
401. *Wink on.* Refuse to see.
404. *Recks me not.* Gives me no concern.
- 420-475. This long speech in praise of chastity states the

moral of the whole masque. It was a fundamental idea in Milton's thought.

421. *Complete*. The accent is on the first syllable.

423. *Unharboured*. Having no harbours or shelters.

426. *Bandite*. Bandit; the word was newly come from the Italian 'bandito.'

430. *Unblenched*. Unfrightened, unabashed.

441. *Dian*. Diana, the goddess of the moon, a huntress maiden.

443. *Brinded*. Brindled.

447. *Gorgon shield*. The shield of Minerva on which was the head of Medusa, one of the Gorgons, three women with snakes for hair. Whoever looked at them was turned to stone.

459-469. The teaching of these lines is based on that of Plato. Warton first pointed out the passage in the *Phaedo* on which it is based.

455. *Lackey*. Accompany her as servants.

459. *Oft*. Frequent.

470-475. These lines are almost a translation of a passage in the *Phaedo*.

476-480. Notice this famous tribute to the charms of philosophy.

483. *Night-foundered*. Lost or sunk in night. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 204, 'some small night-foundered skiff.'

495. *Madrigal*. Literally a shepherd's song but applied to an elaborate composition in parts. Notice the compliment to Lawes, who is playing the part of the Spirit.

517. *Chimeras*. A monster with the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a dragon.

520. *Navel*. Centre.

526. *Murmurs*. Charms spoken or chanted as the drugs were mixed.

530. *Charactered*. Engraved; the accent is on the second syllable.

547. *Meditate*. Practise.

548. *Close*. End of the tune.

560. *Still*. Always.

589-590. These two lines summarize the teaching of the masque.

598-599. That is, there is no sure basis for morals or belief.

604. *Acheron*. A river of Hades; and so 'of Acheron' means here 'of Hell.'

605. *Harpies and Hydras*. The harpies were loathsome bird-like creatures; the hydras were many-headed water serpents.

610. *Emprise*. Enterprise.

636. *Moly*. All we know of this plant is that told in the next line. It had a black root and milk-white flower and was a charm against the spells of Circe.

637. *Hermes*. Here in his capacity of god of healing.

656. *Sons of Vulcan*. Virgil makes Cacus, one of Vulcan's sons, vomit smoke in his last fight: *Aeneid*, viii, 251-253.

661. *Daphne*. The nymph who was changed into a tree at her own request as she fled from Apollo.

672. *Cordial julep*. Medicinal drink; a julep is literally rose-water.

675. *Nepenthes*. The opiate that Helen gave to Menelaus, *Odyssey*, iv., 220ff. She is said to have got it from 'Polydamna, an Egyptian, the wife of Thone.'

698. *Vizored*. Covered, masked.

707. *Budge*. Pedantic.

707. *Stoic fur*. Stoic school; fur was used to trim the hood of the B.A. gown. The Stoics taught severe self-restraint.

708. *The Cynic tub*. A reference to the Cynic philosopher Diogenes who lived in a tub. The Cynics taught that pleasure was an evil if sought for its own sake.

719. *Hutched*. Stored as in a hutch or chest.

721. *Pulse*. Beans, peas.

722. *Frieze*. A rough coarse cloth.

738. *Cozened*. Deceived.

743-4. These two lines state the Epicurean point of view. They form one of the best known quotations in the language

750. *Grain*. Color.

760. *Bolt*. Sift, refine.

775. For the idea expressed here, compare Lamb's well-known essay, *Grace before Meat*.

780. *Enow*. Enough; a common spelling in Middle English

791. *Fence*. Art of fencing.

800-806. These lines are spoken in an 'aside.'

804. *Erebus*. The gloomy space through which the souls

pass to Hades. It was named after the son of Chaos and brother of Nox (Night).

809-810. These lines state the old theory of the different humours in the body. Melancholy was caused by an excess of black bile; it is just the Greek, indeed, for 'black bile'.

811. *Straight*. At once.

817. That is, saying the charms backward. It is a very old belief that to say a thing backwards reversed its effect. For example the Lord's Prayer said backward was a regular spell used at Hallow-E'en.

826. *Sabrina*. The goddess of the Severn River.

835. *Nereus*. A sea-god, father of the fifty Nereids.

822. *Meliboeus*. The name of a shepherd in Virgil's *Eclogues*. It may refer here to Spenser or to Geoffrey of Monmouth from whom he got the old British legend retold here.

823. *Soothest*. Truest.

838. That is, in baths perfumed with nectar and with asphodel blossoms floating in them.

845. *Urchin blasts*. The urchin is the hedge-hog which was thought to have powers of doing harm.

846. *Shrewd*. Mischievous, troublesome.

859. Notice the smoothness of the flowing metre in this song and the beauty of the language.

863. Her hair is amber colored and is wet.

868. *Oceanus*. The oldest of the sea-gods. The accent is on the second syllable.

870. *Tethys*. Wife of Oceanus and mother of the river-gods.

872. This is Proteus, who carried a hook as he was Neptune's shepherd.

873. *Triton*. He was the son of Neptune and Aphrodite. He rode on the sea-waves blowing his horn of shell.

874. *Glaucus*. A sea-deity who prophesied to the gods.

875. *Leucothea*. Literally, the white goddess. As a mortal she had been Ino, daughter of Cadmus, who had leaped into the sea to escape the pursuit of her mad husband, Athamas. She was made into a goddess as was also her son Melicertes.

878. *Thetis*. One of the sea-nymphs, mother of Achilles.

879. Parthenope and Ligea were Sirens.

894. *Turkis*. A variant spelling for turquoise.

897. *Printless*. This was a mark of her divinity.

921. *Amphitrite*. She was the wife of Neptune.

923. In British legend Locrine was a direct descendant of Aeneas, son of Anchises.

958. This song is addressed to the country dancers who are to make way for the more graceful performance by the three children. ✓

960. *Duck or nod*. Movements characteristic of the country dance.

964. *Dryades*. Wood-nymphs.

966. The children are here brought forward and presented to their parents. Note the pleasant domestic atmosphere of the scene.

993. *Blow*. Make blossom.

995. *Purfled*. Fringed, embroidered.

99. *Adonis*. The beautiful youth of whom Venus was enamored. He was killed by a wild boar when hunting.

1003. Venus was identified with the Assyrian Astarte.

1006. *Psyche*. In Greek myth she was the personified and deified soul loved by Eros or Cupid.

1011. The whole passage from 976 implies that there is a place of perfect love and enjoyment for those who are worthy. Comus had tried to anticipate these joys by revelling in the pleasures of the senses.

1015. *The bowed welkin*. The arched sky.

1017. *Corners*. Horns; the original Latin sense of 'cornu.'

1018. *Would*. Wish to. That is, all who wish to enjoy the delights he has just described, must take the path of Virtue. The passage from here to the end is the very essence of the whole masque.

## LYCIDAS

*Lycidas* was written in November 1637 in memory of a college friend, Edward King, who was drowned off the Welsh coast when crossing from Chester to Ireland. King, the son of Sir John King, Secretary to the Government of Ireland under three monarchs, Elizabeth, James and Charles, had entered Christ's College, Cambridge in 1626 a year after Milton. Milton left in 1632 but King, after taking his M.A. in 1633, remained as fellow and tutor of his college. His Cambridge friends,

following a fashion of the time, wrote poems in his memory which they published in 1638. The first part of the volume consisted of 23 poems in Greek and Latin, the second of 13 in English with *Lycidas* ending the series.

There is nothing to prove that Milton and King were close friends, a fact that makes the writing of *Lycidas* all the more remarkable. Here is a poem written in memory of a college acquaintance, in a form that is purely conventional and now quite out of fashion, yet it remains one of the great elegies of the world. There is just one reason—the genius of Milton. He poured into the rather stiff mould of a pastoral lament all the richness and beauty of his greatest verse and he used King's death as the occasion for pointing out the abuses which had crept into the Established Church, and which, as he sternly warns it, will be its ruin. Well might St. Peter lament the loss of this good shepherd when the church was swarming with men who "for their bellies' sake" had crept or intruded or climbed 'into the fold.'

The hardness of temper that appears for the first time in *Lycidas* marks the change from the poet of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* and even *Comus* into the sterner champion of Puritanism. Never again was he to recapture quite the same tender cadences, quite the same delightful rippling melodies that were his birthright as a poet of the Renaissance. And so the *Lycidas* has for the lover of Milton a peculiar appeal. It is not merely a great poem, it is the last poem he wrote in English before he plunged into the political and religious controversy that, except for some sonnets, was to demand all his writing for the next twenty years. And when he returned again to his vocation of poetry, it was to 'justify the ways of God to men' in a world where all he had fought for seemed lost beyond hope of recovery.

1. *Yet once more.* Milton had resolved not to write until he had completed certain studies and had gained the wisdom that comes only with age. But, he says, for one more time he must break his resolve and compose such poetry as he can, 'For *Lycidas* is dead.'

2. *The mellowing year.* That is, age which brings ripeness and strength. He is going to pluck a wreath from these plants that supply poets, but he is plucking it before the time; the berries are harsh and crude and he is unskilful.

8. *Lycidas*. This name occurs in pastoral poems by Virgil Bion, and Theocritus.

11. *To sing*. Various poems by King are still extant. They are in Latin with a few exceptions.

15. *Sisters of the sacred well*. The Muses; the sacred well is the Pierian Spring at the foot of Mount Olympus where was the home of the gods, according to Homer.

19. *Muse*. Here used in the sense of 'poet'. And so the 'he' in 20.

23. Notice the division into paragraphs. The one beginning here and ending at line 36 tells the story of the poet's association with Lycidas.

28. *The grey-fly*. The trumpet-fly which has a sharp hum in the noon-tide heat.

29. *Battening*. Feeding.

33. *Tempered*. Set, modulated.

34. The satyrs were sylvan demi-gods, with the legs of a goat and head and trunk of a man. The fauns had the shape of men and had pointed ears and small horns.

36. *Damoetas*. This name is given to a shepherd by Virgil and Theocritus. Some think Milton is referring to some master of a Cambridge college.

37. Here begins a formal lament for Lycidas.

45. *Canker*. Cankerworm.

46. *Taint-worm*. Not a worm but a small red spider supposed to be harmful to cattle.

46. *Weanling*. New-weaned.

51. Notice that there is no rhyme for this line, the sixth without a rhyme so far.

52. *The steep*. This is thought to be Penmaenmawr, opposite Anglesey.

53. *Druids*. Priests of the old British religion.

54. *Mona*. Anglesey.

55. *Deva*. The Dee.

58. *The Muse*. Calliope. The Thracian women were so enraged at Orpheus for his long continued grief at the loss of his wife Eurydice that they tore him to pieces in a Bacchanalian revel. His head was borne down the river Hebrus to the sea where it came to Lesbos and was buried. Orpheus was the sweetest of musicians. See *L'Allegro*, 144-150.



61. *The rout.* The Bacchantes.

64. The twenty lines beginning here are a digression on the lack of reward for poetry.

66. *Meditate.* Compare *Comus.*, 547.

68. *Amaryllis.* This and *Nacera* are names given to shepherdesses by Theocritus and Virgil. Lines 67-69 have become proverbial for a life of ease and indulgence.

70. *Fame.* That is, the hope of fame.

*Spirit.* This is the object of 'raise'.

75. *The blind Fury.* Atropos, that one of the three Fates who severed the thread of life. It is not clear why Milton should call her a Fury; perhaps it is because she killed Lycidas.

77. *Phoebus.* Apollo, the god of poetry.

77. *Touched.* Evidently in rebuke. The passage is based on one in Virgil, *Eclogues*, VI, 3-5. Lines 77-83 contain Milton's answer to the natural question of people as to the value of all the long training and the hard work of the young man who had been drowned before he was able to do anything deserving of fame in the eyes of the world.

79-80. That is, fame does not consist either in the brilliancy or the extent of the reputation he may have in the world of his day. It seems best to take 'in the glistening foil' with 'lies.' 'Glistening foil' is a sheet of some metallic leaf like tin-foil, which can be used to set off things put on it as a background.

85. *Arethuse.* Arethusa was a fountain in an island near the Sicilian coast. It was to the pastoral poets what the fountain of Hippocrene at the foot of Mount Helicon was to epic poets.

86. *Mincius.* A tributary of the Po in Italy near Virgil's birthplace and so representative of Latin pastoral poetry.

87. *That strain.* The words of Phoebus.

89. *The herald.* Triton, sent by Neptune to investigate the wreck.

96. *Hippotades.* Aeolus, god of the winds.

99. *Panope.* One of the Nereids.

100-102. Milton blames the wreck on the ill-fated ship. As a matter of fact she struck a rock in calm weather and soon sank with most of those aboard. King's body was never recovered.

103. *Camus.* The Spirit of the Cam, the river of Cambridge.

106. *That sanguine flower.* That flower sprung from blood,



the hyacinth, which grew where the youth was killed by Apollo as they were playing quoits. The leaves of the flower have markings thought to be the Greek for 'alas', that is 'ai'.

107. *Pledge*. Child; the word was common in this figurative sense.

109. *The Pilot*. St. Peter.

110. *Massy*. Massive.

111. *Amain*. With force. The two keys of gold and iron were traditional. Milton accepts St. Peter as the leader of the apostles and of the church. He bases this passage on *Matthew*, xvi, 19, and *John*, xxi, 15-17.

112. *Mitred*. Covered with the mitre, the distinctive head-dress of the bishop.

119. *Blind mouths*. A violent metaphor to be explained by the fact that Milton is thinking of the two great classes of clergymen, the bishops and the pastors. The bishop is an overseer and the pastor a shepherd, according to the literal meaning of the words. And so a bishop who is blind and a pastor who eats instead of feeding his flock are the worst of Christian clergymen. The reader should see for this whole passage 108-131 the elaborate commentary by Ruskin in his lecture "On Queens' Gardens" in *Sesame and Lillies*.

122. *Recks it them*. Does it matter to them.

123. *List*. Please.

122. *Sped*. Provided for.

123. *Flashy*. Insipid.

124. *Scrannel*. Thin, squeaking.

126. *They draw*. Which they draw or breathe.

128. *Privy*. Secretly cognizant. That is, Milton charges that the clergy of the time are secretly in sympathy with the Church of Rome which was winning over members from the Established Church at this time. This was one of the charges made by the Puritans against Archbishop Laud. The 'rank mist' and 'foul contagion' are the false doctrines that the people breathe on every side.

130. *That two-handed engine*. There is much disagreement about the meaning of this expression. There are three interpretations: it is the axe of the Gospel that cuts down the unrighteous (*Matthew*, iii. 10, *Luke*, iii. 9); it is the two-handed sword of Michael (*Paradise Lost*, 251-253); it is the Parliament

of England with its two Houses of the Lords and Commons. Masson argues strongly for the last of these.

131. *No more.* One blow will be enough.

132. *Alpheus.* He is invoked as the lover of Arethusa. It is a device to get back to the milder tone properly characteristic of a pastoral poem. Note the exquisite beauty of the richly colored passage 133-151 with its studied contrast to the stern indictment by St. Peter.

136. *Use.* Inhabit, live, frequent.

138. *The swart star.* The dog-star, Sirius. It was thought to bring heat which causes swarthinness of complexion.

138. *Sparely.* Sparingly.

142. *Rathe.* Early.

153. *False surmise.* That the body of Lycidas is to be buried in a coffin strewn with all these flowers.

156. *Hebrides.* These islands are to the north-west of the place of the wreck. The 'Bellerus' or Land's End of line 160 is to the south-west.

159. *Our moist vows.* Our tearful votive offerings.

161. *Laureate hearse.* Tomb or coffin with the poet's laurel on it.

160. *The fable.* The legendary haunt. Milton had originally written Corineus for Bellerus. He retains the adjective properly applicable to the former who was a legendary figure in early British history. Bellerium was the Roman name for Land's End.

161. *The guarded mount.* St. Michael's Mount near Land's End where St. Michael once appeared to some pilgrims, seated on the mount and looking seaward. Milton imagines him still sitting there looking towards Spain.

162. *Namancos.* A town near Cape Finisterre.

162. *Bayona.* A city to the south of the same cape.

163. *Ruth.* Pity.

164. *Dolphins.* An allusion to the legend of the dolphins carrying the poet Arion to shore when he was thrown into the sea by the sailors.

169. *Anon.* Soon.

170. *Tricks.* Decks out.

173. See *Matthew* xiv., 22-33.

176. *Unexpressive.* That cannot be expressed.

183. *Genius*. Guardian spirit.

184. *In thy large recompense*. As a great reward for you.

185-193. Notice that these lines are not part of the lament proper.

186. One of the most beautiful lines in English poetry.

189. *Doric*. This is a poem written in the manner of the Greek poets Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, who wrote in a Doric dialect, not in the Greek of Attica.

193. Note that this often misquoted line has 'woods,' not 'fields.'

(Iambic meter - Latin + Greek)  
 dactylic hexameter  
 diaeresis after fourth foot

## JOHN DRYDEN, 1631-1700

## ALEXANDER'S FEAST

Henry St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, says that one morning when he called on the poet, Dryden said to him: "I have been up all night: my musical friends made me promise to write them an Ode for their feast of St. Cecilia, and I was so struck with the subject which occurred to me that I could not leave it till I had completed it; here it is finished at one sitting." If this story is credible, Dryden's was a remarkable feat. He was sixty-six years of age, a time of life when few men have the power to work all night and still fewer can write with the fire and vivacity of youth. *Alexander's Feast* may be somewhat artificial, as has often been charged, but in the skill which varies the language and rhythm from stanza to stanza yet keeps the verse always musical, it is one of the great English odes.

Music lovers had revived the festival of St. Cecilia in England in 1683 when the famous composer Purcell wrote the music for a song composed in her honor. The poets Oldham and Nahum Tate wrote songs for 1684 and 1685 respectively. Dryden had written *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* in 1687. And now ten years later he dashed off this ode, unquestionably the greatest of these St. Cecilia poems. The last notable one was Pope's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* in 1708.

1. *For Persia won.* On account of the conquest of Persia. The reference is to the decisive battle of Arbela fought near the city of that name in Assyria in 331 B.C. Alexander had 47,000 men and Darius a force said to be almost 1,000,000.

2. Alexander the Great was the son of Philip of Macedon. He was born at Pella in Macedonia in 356 and died at Babylon in 323 B.C.

7. These garlands were customary at Greek feasts.

9. *Thais.* Alexander's mistress, a famous Athenian beauty. She is alleged (probably without any truth) to have incited Alexander to burn the Persian palace at Persepolis.

20. *Timotheus.* Dryden is probably mistaken here. At any

rate the famous Athenian musician of this name who improved the cithara by adding another string to it died the year before Alexander was born. There was, however, another musician of the same name, a Theban, who is said to have flourished in Alexander's time.

21. *Quire.* Choir.

25. *Began from Jove.* Started with a reference to or story about Jove.

28. *Belied.* Disguised.

29. *Sublime in radiant spires.* Upreared in shining spirals.

30. *Olympia.* Olympias, the mother of Alexander.

33. Plutarch in his life of Alexander gives this account of his parentage.

35. *A present deity.* This, of course, is Alexander.

36. *Rebound.* Echo.

41. Homer and Virgil both speak of the nod of Zeus or Jove shaking Olympus.

47. *Bacchus.* The god of wine and merriment.

51. *Purple.* Ruddy, blood-red.

52. *Honest.* Handsome, fair-seeming.

53. *Hautboys.* Oboes, wind instruments of high-pitched tone.

67. *Fought.* In his memory or imagination.

70. *Ardent.* In the literal sense of 'burning' or 'fiery.'

72. *His . . . his.* The first of these refers to Timotheus, the second probably to Alexander.

*Changed his hand.* Altered the time and key of his music.

73. *Muse.* Strain, melody.

75. *Sung.* Sung is common as the past tense of the verb down to about 1830.

*Darius.* The king of Persia whom he had just conquered

86. *Below.* In this world.

94. *In the next degree.* The next step after love.

97. *Lydian measures.* Soft, languishing melodies. Compare *L' Allegro*, 135-150.

101-102. *Still.* Always.

113. *At once.* At the same time.

132. *Furies.* Female divinities, avengers of iniquity. They were represented as having snaky locks and fiery, blood-shot eyes.

139. *Unburied.* Unless the dead had at least the ceremonial burial of three handfuls of earth cast on the corpse, his spirit

was doomed to wander for a hundred years on the banks of the river Styx.

147. *Flambeau*. Torch.

150. *Helen*. The famous Helen of Troy, wife of Menelaus of Sparta, who went to Troy with Paris. The Trojan War was fought to get her back.

156. *Bellows*. Used in the pipe-organ to maintain the pressure of air in the pipes.

157. *Were mute*. That is, had not been invented.

161. *Cecilia*. St. Cecilia, patron saint of music and, according to a legend which has no foundation, the inventress of the organ.

162. *The vocal frame*. The organ, the speaking structure.

180. This is a reference to the legend that an angel came to hear her play.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, 1770-1850

## ELEGIAC STANZAS

Suggested by a picture of Peele Castle, in a storm, painted by  
Sir George Beaumont

This poem was written in 1805 and published in 1807. Its real subject, as the title of 'Elegiac Stanzas' hints, is not the picture of Peele Castle but the death of his brother at sea by ship-wreck and the consequent change in his feeling towards nature. A whole group of poems—the *Ode to Duty*, *To the Daisy* (Sweet Flower! belike one day to have), *Elegiac Verses in Memory of my Brother*, and this poem—written in 1805, bears witness to the effect on Wordsworth of the loss of his sailor brother. The closing lines of the *Intimations of Immortality* are colored by the same disaster.

On the night of February 5, 1805, John Wordsworth, the dearly loved younger brother of the poet, captain of the East Indiaman *Abergavenny*, was lost with his ship in the English Channel where, through the incompetence of the pilot, she had struck on the Shambles off the Bill of Portland. Neither Wordsworth nor his sister Dorothy ever quite recovered from the shock of this brother's death. Up to this time there is a joyous confidence in Wordsworth's poetry, a confidence based on the friendliness of nature. His faith in that friendliness was shaken to its foundations, as he acknowledges in this poem.

1. In the summer of 1794 Wordsworth spent four weeks at the village of Rampside in Lancashire with a cousin, Mr. Barker. Peele, or rather Piel, Castle is near this village. It is a massive stone pile dating back to the reign of Edward III.

4. *Sleeping*. Reflected.

8. *Trembled*. That is, there was never enough wind to spoil the surface as a mirror.

14-16. These lines try to express the something in a good picture which distinguishes it from a photograph. It is the

artist's vision of what it might be or what to him it really seems to be.

24. *Had.* Would have.

26. *Elysian quiet.* The peace of Elysium, the abode of the blessed.

31. *The soul of truth.* Absolute truth.

36. *A deep distress.* The death of his brother.

41. *Beaumont.* Sir George Beaumont, a landscape painter of some repute.

45. *Passionate.* Full of feeling.

47. *Hulk.* Dismasted and helpless ship.

48. *Pageantry of fear.* Terrifying spectacle.

54. *The kind.* Its own kind, humanity. The sentiment of this whole stanza is a great change from the feeling of his early life when the sights and sounds of nature were sufficient for him without any human fellowship.

56-60. It should be noticed that the stanza form used in this poem is that of Gray's *Elegy*, which has come to be spoken of as the elegiac measure of English verse.

#### LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY

Wordsworth's own note to this poem reads: "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. It was published almost immediately after in the little volume of which so much has been said in these notes." The little volume referred to is the famous *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798.

This poem is one of the most explicit statements of Wordsworth's attitude towards Nature. It can be more readily understood if one reads along with it at least some of the other poems or passages in which he deals with the same theme. The *Ode, Intimations of Immortality, Nutting, The Prelude*, Book I, lines 401-463; Book VIII, lines 340-356, and *The Recluse*, line 754 to the end, all throw light on this poem; taken together they are the best commentary on it.



The importance of the poem, however, does not depend on the fact that it states Wordsworth's philosophy of Nature. As Dr. Manly has admirably put it: "The poem is notable not so much because it gives explicit expression to the three phases of the love of nature recognized by Wordsworth, as because it is, in intensity of spiritual emotion, in the novelty and truth of its poetical ideas, and in beauty and suggestiveness of phrasing, one of the most perfect poems ever written." There are very few things in the language that give the reader such a thrill of spiritual exaltation as the great passage,

And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime,  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

1. *Five years.* Wordsworth had walked alone from Salisbury to Wales in 1793.

2. *Inland murmur.* Webb cites Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, ix:

There twice a day the Severn fills;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.  
The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls.

Wordsworth has a footnote: 'The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.'

5. *Cliffs.* The Wye flows between steep wooded hills from Monmouth to Chepstow near which it empties into the Severn.

7. *Connect.* The eye follows the cliffs up to the line where they seem to merge with the sky.

11. *Orchard-tufts.* Note how accurate this description is of clumps of trees that look tiny in the distance.

13. *One green hue.* That is, the green is almost uniform in

shade. The blossoms are over and the unripe fruits have not yet begun to color. Wordsworth dates his visit July 13.

15. *Hardly hedge-rows.* That is, they are not formal hedges that have been planted in straight rows but strips of bushes growing wild.

19. *Uncertain.* Because the houses cannot be seen in the woods.

22. The passage beginning here and ending at line 57 is the poet's testimony to the influence that these scenes have had on him in absence.

25-27. Compare 'I wandered lonely as a cloud,' lines 19-24.

28-29. The words 'blood,' 'heart,' 'mind,' suggest the three phases of the love of nature that Wordsworth seems to distinguish. The first is mere sensation, the animal joy in nature, such as is told of in sections III and IV of the *Ode, Intimations of Immortality* and hinted at in lines 73-74 of this poem. The second is the passionate love of nature so wonderfully told here in lines 76-82. The third is the stage described in lines 88-111. 3p

30. *With tranquil restoration.* The memory of these beautiful forms of nature calms and restores him almost without his realizing how the cure is wrought.

31. *Unremembered pleasure.* That is, the immediate cause of the joy is forgotten but the feeling remains.

32-35. This idea is a fundamental one with Wordsworth. Goodness depends on love, and love, in its turn, depends on one's state of feeling. And so, as he points out in that often misunderstood passage in *The Tables Turned*,

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good  
Than all the sages can.

For that impulse will make you love your fellow-man just because you feel the gladness of spring yourself, and so find it easy to be kindly and considerate. Note, too, what Wordsworth thinks the 'best portion of a good man's life,' the little acts of kindness that he performs almost unconsciously. It is an interesting commentary on the scripture injunction 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.'

43-46. Compare for this expression of mysticism lines 141-145

of the *Ode, Intimations of Immortality* and his introductory note to that poem.

46. *A living soul.* That is, a soul while still alive; all consciousness of having a body is gone.

47. *Eye made quiet.* Compare line 51 of *A Poet's Epitaph*, 'The harvest of a quiet eye.'

49. *This.* The belief that we can see into the heart of things.

54. *Hung upon.* Weighed upon would be the more usual expression. He seems to be thinking of clouds hanging low over the scene they darken.

60. *Sad perplexity.* At his failure to make the scene before him and the one he remembers correspond exactly.

66. *When first.* In 1793 when he was 23 years of age.

73. *Coarser pleasures.* The swimming, rowing, skating, and bird-nesting described in the first book of *The Prelude*.

80. *An appetite.* Things hungered for.

86. *Other gifts.* Compare *Intimations of Immortality*, 179-186.

94. *A presence.* A spirit or deity present in all things. Lines 95-102 attempt to define this spirit, not in rigid terms of science or philosophy but in the more suggestive phrasing of poetical language. It is a spirit to be felt rather than understood by the mind.

106. *What they half create.* Wordsworth has pointed out that Young said the same thing in his *Night Thoughts*, vii, 427, where he writes that the senses 'half create the world they use.' Wordsworth seems to mean that the eye and ear add to the objects of sense something more than is present in these objects in themselves. Compare lines 175-178 of *Intimations of Immortality*.

107-111. Matthew Arnold in his essay on Wordsworth in *Essays in Criticism* has this passage which is relevant to these lines and to much more in this poem: "Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, . . . and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.

The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally . . . Wordsworth tells of what all seek, and

tells of it at its truest and best source, and yet a source where all may go and draw for it."

113. *Genial*. Native, inborn.

114. *Thou*. His sister, Dorothy. She was only a year younger than the poet.

125. *Inform*. Mould.

131. For Wordsworth's dislike of mere gossip see the four sonnets grouped under the title *Personal Talk*.

126-128. For an example of this influence of nature see the poem, 'Three years she grew in sun and shower,' called *The Education of Nature* by Palgrave, in whose *Golden Treasury* it is number ccxxii.

149. *Past existence*. Not a former life but past experiences of this one.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON, 1788-1824

## LACHIN Y GAIR

*Lachin y Gair* was published in a collection of Byron's poems, 'Original and Translated,' entitled *Hours of Idleness*, in the year 1807. It was written, therefore, before he was twenty years old. The note prefixed to the poem in *Hours of Idleness* states all that is needed to understand why it was written:

"*Lachin y Gair*, or, as it is pronounced in the Erse, *Loch na Garr*, towers proudly pre-eminent in the Northern Highlands, near Invercauld. One of our modern tourists mentions it as the highest mountain, perhaps, in Great Britain. Be this as it may, it is certainly one of the most sublime and picturesque amongst our "Caledonian Alps." Its appearance is of a dusky hue, but the summit is the seat of eternal snows. Near *Lachin y Gair* I spent some of the early part of my life, the recollection of which has given birth to the following stanzas."

(1) This poem is notable for two things: the passionate and  
(2) romantic love of wild nature, especially of mountains, and the facility with which Byron handles an anapestic metre. This love of the wilder aspects of nature echoes in all his later poems, yet is seldom more effectively expressed. He returned to the trampling music of anapestic verse again and again, yet even the famous opening to *The Bride of Abydos*, 'Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle,' merely refines on the music of *Lachin y Gair*.

2. *Minions*. Favorites.

5. *Caledonia*. The old Roman name for the northern part of Britain. It is now used in poetry for Scotland.

10. *Bonnet*. The Scotch bonnet.

*Plaid*. A rectangular cloth worn in place of a cloak. It was usually of some distinctive tartan. The Scotch pronounce it as in the poem where it rhymes with 'glade.' The English pronunciation is 'plad.'

25. *Ill-starr'd*. Byron's own note reads: "I allude here to my maternal ancestors, 'the Gordons,' many of whom fought

for the unfortunate Prince Charles, better known by the name of the Pretender. This branch was nearly allied by blood, as well as attachment, to the Stuarts. George, the second Earl of Huntley, married the Princess Annabella Stuart, daughter of James I of Scotland. By her he left four sons: the third, Sir William Gordon, I have the honour to claim as one of my progenitors."

27. *Culloden*. A moor about 5 miles east of Inverness where Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, was defeated in 1746. "Whether any perished in the Battle of Culloden, I am not certain; but, as many fell in the insurrection, I have used the name of the principal action, "*pars pro toto*." (Byron).

30. *Braemar*. A tract of the Highlands.

31. *Pibroch*. Bagpipe music, usually martial. Byron seems here to confuse the music with the instrument, as he does in 'Oscar of Alva, line 42.

37-40. These lines mark a great change in taste from the middle of the 18th century, when no well-regulated mind was supposed to admire such rugged and wild scenery as the crags of Lachin y Gair.

## ROBERT BROWNING, 1812-1889

## AN EPISTLE

containing the strange medical experience of Karshish, the Arab physician

*An Epistle* was published in the first volume of *Men and Women* in 1855. It is one of three poems that deal with the beginnings of Christianity. *A Death in the Desert* from the *Dramatis Personae* of 1864 puts into the mouth of St. John, the aged apostle now at the point of death, an exposition of Christianity that is virtually Browning's own belief. *Cleon*, published in the second volume of *Men and Women*, is the letter of a Greek poet, philosopher, and artist to his king, who has written to inquire of Cleon about the future and about the new teaching 'of one called Paulus.' It is really an elaborate commentary on Paul's statement that their preaching of Christ crucified was 'unto the Greeks foolishness.' It shows with great vividness and insight how a cultured Greek of the first century regarded these early missionaries, whose 'doctrines could be held by no sane man.' In *An Epistle* Browning tries to show the impression that the attitude towards life of a primitive Christian would make on an earnest scientist of the first century.

The poem takes the form of a letter in a series which Karshish, an Arab physician, has been sending home to his old teacher, Abib. It relates the adventures of Karshish since he wrote last, tells of various things of medical interest, and then describes, with many apologies for its seeming absurdity, a strange case he has met, which has puzzled him and interested him beyond any real importance he can see in it. Indeed the purely medical aspect of the case is quite simple,

'Tis but a case of mania—subinduced

By epilepsy.

But the changed outlook on life of the patient, Lazarus, is the baffling symptom. His standards of value are utterly at variance with those of the wise and prudent of the world.

Discourse to him of prodigious armaments  
 Assembled to besiege his city now,  
 And of the passing of a mule with gourds—  
 'Tis one!

Karshish sees that the man has had a vision of some life beyond this one, which has made the things most men think important shrink into mere trifles. The man's story is incredible, but there is no doubt that he believes it. He says that he was dead, that he was raised from the dead, and that the one who bade him come from the tomb was God Himself, who lived on earth, taught, healed the sick, broke bread at Lazarus' house, and died by violence. The reverent Arab soul of Karshish is shocked at his story, for the physician has at least that fear of God, which, we read, is the beginning of wisdom. And yet the madman's story haunts him:

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?

So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too.

It is a strange new idea, that God, the All-powerful, should suffer for men and yearn after their love. And there the letter ends.

The madman saith He said so: it is strange.

2. *Not-incurious*. That is, the very curious or inquisitive.

3-6. Note that these four lines are in apposition with 'handiwork.'

6. *Puff of vapour from His mouth*. Clearly a reference to the account of man's creation in *Genesis* ii, 7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

9. *Pricks and cracks*. Notice these homely English concrete terms. Compare the diction of Tennyson and see how differently the two men write.

12. *The term*. The normal time of death.

14. *It*. The vapour.

*Deftly stopping such*. Skilfully closing these pricks and cracks. Abib seems to be a surgeon as well as doctor.

15. *Vagrant*. Wandering.

*Sage*. Wise master.

16. Notice that the greeting is in keeping with the character and profession of Karshish. Like a true doctor he puts health first in a list of good wishes, then knowledge, and last fame 'with peace.'



17. *Snake-stone*. A porous substance, often charred bone, supposed to have the power of extracting the venom from a snake-bite when applied to the wound.

19. *Charms*. In ancient medicine a great part was played by charms. Of course an object was valuable for charms just in proportion to its rarity.

20. The scholar's letters form a sort of diary of his journey.

21. *Were brought*. In his last letter.

*Jericho*. A city of Palestine 14 miles east-northeast of Jerusalem. It was finally destroyed by the Crusaders.

24-25. Note the simple concrete language.

28. *Vespasian*. Roman Emperor 70-79. His son, Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70. Vespasian had been in command of the Roman army making war against the Jews but had left for Rome to be made Emperor.

29-31. Note the vividness of this little sketch.

33. *A spy*. That is, of course, a Roman spy. Note how this little incident reveals the excitement and anxiety of the country-side. On the other hand, note the detached attitude of the scholar, to whom wars are only annoying interruptions of his work.

36. *Bethany*. A village two miles from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. The name in Hebrew means 'house of poverty.'

37. *At the third degree*. That is, in the last and fatal stage of the disease.

38. *Thou laughest here!* Abib, he thinks, will laugh at his quaint unit of measure with the relief it evidently implies at his having got so close to civilization again, for obviously he can get to Jerusalem if one in the last stage of plague can run the distance.

39. *'Sooth*. In sooth, in truth.

40. *Void*. Empty.

42. *Viscid choler*. Clammy biliousness.

43. *In tertians*. Occurring every third day reckoning inclusively, that is, every other day. Note how careful he is not to make the statement positively. He has not had time enough to be certain that it returns every other day.

44. *Falling-sickness*. Epilepsy.

46. *Weaves no web*. Spiders of the wandering group do not weave webs. As this is unusual, it is, of course, a sign that the

creature is likely to have magical properties. Spiders have been used in medicine from ancient times.

49. *Run-a-gate*. Fugitive.

50. *Sublimate*. A medicine purified by being reduced to vapor by heat and then condensed again.

55. *Gum-tragacanth*. The resinous gum of the goat-thorn.

57. *Porphyry*. The dark red or purple stone of which the mortar is made.

60. *Hadst*. Would have.

*Gained*. Contracted, caught.

*Zoar*. A city near the Dead Sea.

63. That is, he will deliver the letter out of gratitude.

67. Notice the vigorous simple diction.

78. *Wit*. Understanding.

81. *Trance*. A trance or state of unconsciousness in which the muscles are rigid is one of the symptoms of epilepsy. It usually lasts only a short time.

82. *Exhibition*. Administering as a remedy; this is the technical sense of the word in medicine.

83. *Exorcisation*. The driving off of an evil spirit.

89. *Conceit*. Fancy.

100. *Nazarene*. Of the town, Nazareth.

102. *Are diurnal*. Are told of daily; stories of folk rising or being raised from the dead were common in ancient times, especially in the East.

103. *Figment*. Fiction; Karshish knows that mania often follows an epileptic fit but it is usually of short duration.

*Fume*. Idle conceit.

106. *Saffron*. The dried orange-colored stigmas and styles of the autumnal crocus. It is used as medicine as well as coloring and flavoring.

107. *For see*. To be taken with "Not so this figment!" of line 103.

108. *Lazarus*. For the story of Lazarus see: *John xi*, 1-44.

109. *Sanguine*. Ruddy and cheerful; in the old physiology the sanguine was considered the best of the four humours or temperaments.

112. *As he*. As if he.

122. *Except*. A use of the word no longer recognized. We have to say unless.

125. *Go. Pass.*

126. *Fixed.* That is, the time when habits are fixed.

140. *The fleshly faculty.* What mere man can imagine or understand.

149. *'Tis one.* It amounts to the same thing.

157. *Wrongly.* That is, in a different way from usual or normal.

164. *Of fear.* Because he thinks the word or gesture a sin.

174-177. This is what the look meant if it were put into words.

177. *Greek fire.* A kind of liquid fire which adhered to whatever it touched. It was probably composed of tar, sulphur, nitre, and petroleum.

178. *Thread.* Guiding line.

184. *As this.* As of this life.

191-193. Note how these lines rise with the stronger feeling into a lyrical beauty.

198. Notice that there is no 's' in this line.

199-201. This grace of humility puzzles Karshish. Spiritual pride might be expected in one who held the secret of life. Humility was considered the chief virtue by the early Christians.

215. *Proselytes.* New converts.

216. *Ground.* Basis for his faith.

219. That is, Lazarus does not argue for his faith. He states the truth as he sees it and, if the listener does not accept it, he considers it is the will of God that the man should not see the truth.

220. Note the vivid metaphor.

225. To Karshish the question is absurd. If Rome is to stamp out his town, it is the will of God. The truth of God will persist and prevail in spite of Rome, or, it may be, through the agency of Rome.

226. *Apathetic.* Void of feeling.

240. *Sublimed.* Heightened, made great.

248. *In a tumult.* This is the story he gathers from Lazarus and the elders. It was about 40 years earlier that he had perished.

249. *Wizardry.* This again is not quite accurate but is Karshish's understanding of the accusation against Jesus.

252. *The earthquake.* See *Matthew xxvii, 51.*

253-255. Notice this explanation of the cause of the earthquake. Unusual phenomena of nature were considered, as they still are by many people, to be warnings of disasters to come.

259. *Their way.* Their usual ungratefulness.

262. *Fame.* Reputation.

272. *At his own house.* See *John* xxii, 2.

281. *Borage.* A rough-hairy blue-flowering European herb used in medicine and for salads. It was considered one of the four cordial flowers for cheering the spirits. Rose, violet, and alkanet were the others. The Roman naturalist Pliny describes it as very exhilarating.

282. *Nitrous.* The stem contains nitre.

*It is strange.* Note how, though Karshish has tried to get away from the case he has just been trying to diagnose, his mind is so taken up with it that he has to come back to it again.

286. *Nor I.* Nor do I.

*Writ.* Written, an archaic form of the past participle.

292. Note the very unusual and vivid simile.

299. *Ambiguous.* Doubtful, of doubtful character.

300. *With equal good.* That is, it has no real value.

305. *So.* If Lazarus' story were true.

308. *It.* Thy face.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD, 1822-1888

## MEMORIAL VERSES

April, 1850

*Memorial Verses* was published in *Fraser's Magazine* for June, 1850, and was dated April 27. Wordsworth had died at Rydal Mount, his home in the village of Rydal, Westmoreland, on April 23, 1850. These verses in his memory are among Arnold's best-known work. They are probably the finest expression of Arnold's almost unique power of writing literary criticism in verse. The poem contains all that is essential in his essays on Byron and Wordsworth in *Essays in Criticism*.

1. *Goethe*. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, born at Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1749, died at Weimar, 1832, is the greatest German man of letters. He is famous as dramatist, poet, novelist, and critic.

*Weimar*. The capital of the grand duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Germany. It became celebrated as a literary centre in the half-century 1775-1825 from the residence in it of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and Wieland under the patronage of the grand duke.

2. *Byron's*. Byron died at Missolonghi, Greece, on January 5, 1824.

5. *Tomb*. Note the imperfect rhyme which serves to vary the simple rhyme effects. The couplet is the basis of the rhyme scheme but alternate rhymes and three lines rhyming break the uniformity of movement.

14. *Titanic*. The Titans were earth-born monsters who warred on the gods; note the appropriateness of the comparison for anyone who agrees with Arnold's view of Byron.

17. *Iron age*. In ancient mythology there were four ages of gold, silver, brass, and iron. In the age of iron there would come vice, misery, and confusion.

24. A reference to the great struggles of the Napoleonic Wars and the troubled period that followed them.

29-33. Note the simplicity and precision of these fine lines.

37. *Erst*. First.

38. *Orpheus*. See note on *L'Allegro*, line 146.

44. Arnold is no doubt thinking of the political and religious controversies in England in the period 1830-1850.

➤ 48-57. These lines embody one of the finest tributes ever paid to Wordsworth.

68. The darkness of man's fate.

69. One has only to think of Henley's *Invictus* to feel the truth of Arnold's prophecy.

72. *Rotha*. A little stream of the Lake District, that flows by Grasmere Churchyard, where Wordsworth is buried.

















